

GloMag

GloMag

*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose
Magazine*

January 2017



Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

Vidya Sundar



Title of the Cover Pic: From a series titled “Memories, Dreams and Desires

ARTIST STATEMENT

Artist **Vidya Sundar** who has a Master of Fine Arts in Painting, Master of Arts in English Literature says that Art heals, pacifies and soothes the human mind and body. Her paintings depict the feminine aspects of beauty, freedom and strength. A woman is Mother, the Goddess of creativity, willpower and wisdom being her supreme symbols of Sakthi. She is Nature, the twin aspect of Brahman, inseparable from it and the eternal. She is Sakthi, Vidya, Mahamaya, Mohini and mother of all arts, sciences and beings-Living and Non-living. Her inbuilt harmony of music of spheres gives cosmic Nada, Swara and Raga to all

beings. This Carnival of Musical Harmony in colours and these healing, pacifying and soothing elements of art are the essence of her paintings.

She has done several solo and group exhibitions throughout India.

Awards: Dr.Suvarna Nalapat Trust Puraskaram – 2015 Best Contemporary Art Award from Bengal Art Foundation at Indian Contemporary Art Exhibition, State Art Gallery, Guwahati 2015.

Works in Collection of: Various business houses in India and private collectors in India and abroad.

Participated in Kerala Lalithakala Academy state Exhibitions for the year 2013 and 2014, Participated in key of five days degree show 2013 conducted by Govt. college of fine arts, Thrissur. Participated at national mural camp chumar chitranagari 2013 at Kottayam, participated in painting camp, Thrissur peruma organized by Thrissur District tourism promotion council 2014.

Assisted in Relief Mural camp at Kollangode museum, Thrissur, organized by Kerala Lalithakala Academy and Archaeological Department, 2014. Group show Confluence 2015 at Laburnum and Indigo Galleries Choramandalam Artists village, Chennai.

ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag is the coming together of writers in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions - and the visual interpretation of these. Sometimes the original thought of the writer gets completely lost in the interpretations. Visual aids help us to decipher the writer's intentions, and at the same time, enhance the reading experience. Perhaps you are sitting in solitude beneath a bough, besides a lake, and you turn the pages. The thoughts capture you, time stands still, and you become engrossed, oblivious to anything but these beautiful verses, expressions, and pictures. Your soul dances in ecstasy, participates in a cosmic experience, it sways and chants. Somewhere someone is telling you about duality, someone tells you about a forlorn house without music, someone shows you how to love, and someone raises questions about existence itself.

And when you come to, the world is still there, the lake is still there, the birds are chirping, shadows have lengthened. Nothing feels the same! You are not the same! You get up reluctantly. It's time to go home.

Glory Sasikala

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BACKGROUND MUSIC: Candle In The Wind by Richard Clayderman

PREFACE

Don Beukes

(Author of 'The Salamander Chronicles')



It is indeed an honour to start off the new year with my first ever preface for such a distinguished family of word weavers and indeed the GloMag family. Peace, love, patience and tolerance to you all!

This is probably the most challenging form of writing I have ever had the honour of attempting. As this ekphrastic literary venue is so special to me, I promise to do my utmost best to make its creator proud of my humble effort.

Where to begin, which path to follow, what wisdom do I have to share? As you can detect I am flustered with images and references popping in and out of my mind, a true literary avalanche! I guess I will just speak from the heart so let's make a start.

Passions – I have many and am inspired by many. As an early seventies baby, I grew up in a loving family home surrounded by my parents, two much older sisterly siblings and a few others, so I was surrounded by encompassing protected love. At that young age, I was of course like many others of my generation in South Africa, blissfully unaware of the racially segregated divided country I was born into. Although we were racially classified under South African apartheid law as ‘coloured’ and forced to live in ‘coloured’ only suburbs far away from Cape Town city and its Atlantic ocean beaches and leafy suburbs where only ‘whites’ were allowed to live and dwell, our lives were filled with endless laughter, scrumptious food, music, dreams and gratefulness for having each other and of course living in the ‘Mother City’ Cape Town, dwarfed by the majestic Table Mountain rising about 1000 m up to the heavens, which is visible from as far as 100 km towards the blue mountainous escarpment jetting upwards to the sky from sea level.

My musical history from a very early age consisted of Abba, disco hits of the time and blues sounds at weddings and legendary parties. I was told to learn how to play the recorder in Sunday school and subsequently could read music and was able to give mini concerts every day after school to my biggest fan, my mother, Johanna ‘Poppy’

Rosetta (Marsh) Beukes. A big name for a small angel. I sang in the church choir well into my late twenties before I left home to venture into the unknown global village I am still part of. I guess I was meant to explore this beautiful planet we are blessed to find ourselves on.

The best times of our lives were during Christmas time, as the summer school holidays were three months long! Lazy and long hot liquid afternoons with lots of ice cream and homemade drinks to feast on each day and beach trips at the weekend if we behaved ourselves (on 'coloured' only beaches of course). My culinary journey is also legendary. Every other Sunday this or that aunty would bring over sweet treats with sweet tea throwing us into sweet reverie. My favourite, well for any South African, was 'melktert' or milk tart. No party or social gathering was complete without this delicate delicacy. There was also malva pudding but I was not that keen on it. Occasionally, someone would bring over 'yskastert' or fridge tart, in a massive rectangular dish which actually had to set in the fridge with a base of crushed Scottish short cake biscuits. Ok, I will stop right there if you don't mind. Such sweet memories just make my glands remember that sweet sensation, and frankly, make me homesick.

I was lucky and blessed to be able to go on a senior high school tour of South Africa in 1989, all due to my family's

realisation that I was born a traveller! That trip changed my life forever. I could finally see the country I so loved despite its troubles. Each person I met no matter which colour, culture or belief was like meeting inhabitants from another world and ten years later I would find myself jetting off to London as a young teacher, as more opportunities opened up for us after Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected president of South Africa. I will be eternally grateful to my family for opening life's doors for me.

Each stage of life also needs to evolve and opening new doors. As you might well know by now, I have found such a door in this creative world I am blessed to be part of. I am fuelled by my young experiences of life, well it helps to also have an old soul! I am passionate about what life has to offer and sad when life itself threatens our humanity. There are so many historical events that we all do not want to see repeated but sadly we see it unfold before our very eyes in many parts of the world and we recognise the dangers yet the leaders we trust in to lead us desert us. We need to stand together in whichever way we can to spread as much goodness as we can and somehow continue fighting for peace and harmony, even through spilling ink if only for one message to reach someone on the other side of this planet, whether hand-written or digital.

I believe in this human race and will endeavour to continue fighting for our moral compass to be adjusted now and then to maintain the equilibrium we are bound to protect. If not, I shudder to think how much worse things can get but we must remain hopeful and positive. This is why for some reason in this literary family, I have found peace, harmony, hope and a clear vision of what we need to do to survive this earthly life and somehow prepare for the next, wherever you believe that to be or if at all. It doesn't matter, let us just try together.

I want to end off with the exciting news that my debut poetry collection, 'The Salamander Chronicles' was published in December 2016 by Creative Talents Unleashed. This is indeed a great achievement on my young creative journey and I want to thank GloMag for also giving me a platform for my words to reach our global village.

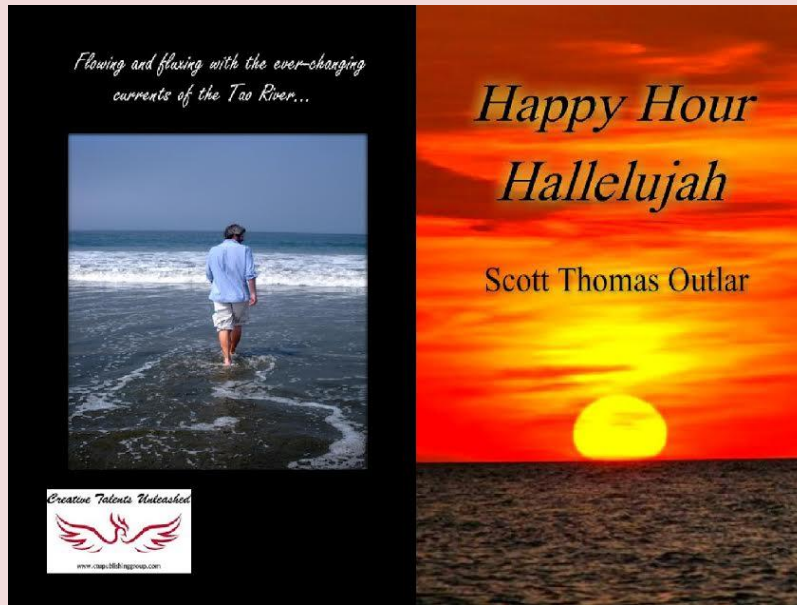
Here is the link to my Author page
<http://www.ctupublishinggroup.com/don-beukes-.html>

Carpe diem!

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Happy Hour Hallelujah

Scott Thomas Outlar



Happy Hour Hallelujah can be purchased directly through CTU Publishing via this link:

<http://www.ctupublishinggroup.com/scott-thomas-outlar-.html>

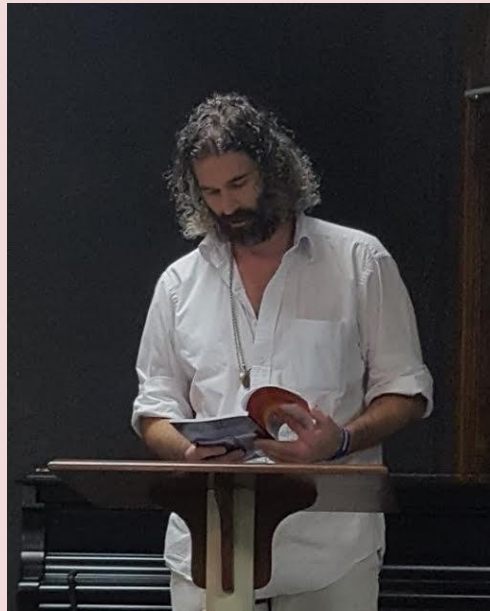
REVIEWS:

The deeply woven texture of the poems and their intricacies show how poetry is a subtle art with deft handling of context and form. - Ananya S. Guha

With his first full-length collection of poetry, *Happy Hour Hallelujah*, Outlar has decided to delve into the depths of

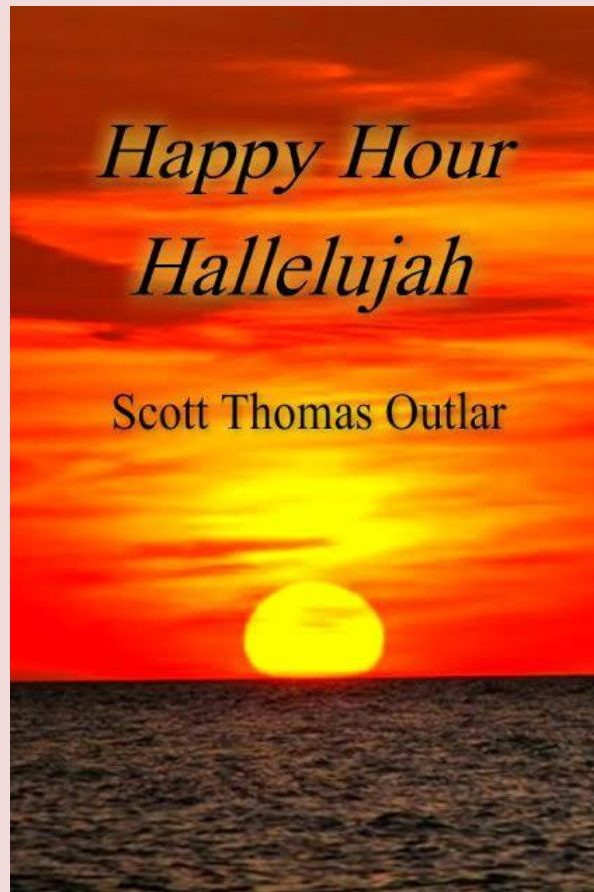
the human psyche, exploring the inner workings of the mind/spirit connection. - Heath Brougher

Scott Thomas Outlar writes with lightning in his fingertips and his words blaze across the page into one's heart! He is one of my favorite poets. - Stephen Jarrell Williams



ABOUT SCOTT

Scott Thomas Outlar spends the hours flowing and fluxing with the ever-changing currents of the Tao River while laughing at and/or weeping over life's existential nature. He is a Best of the Net and three-time 2016 Pushcart Prize nominee. Scott serves as an editor for Walking Is Still Honest Press, The Blue Mountain Review, and The Peregrine Muse. He hosts the site 17Numa.wordpress.com where links to his published poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, reviews, and books can be found.



ABOUT HAPPY HOUR HALLELUJAH

Ultimately, **Happy Hour Hallelujah** is a proclamation and celebration of life even while staring the suffering of existence squarely in the eyes. It is an affirmation of the Great Yes that art defiantly screams in the face of entropy's existential core. It is a truth that seeks to puncture through deception. It is a fire that yearns to rise from out the ashes. It is the next step forward when all momentum seems to be at a standstill. It is a light piercing through the darkness. It is nothing more and nothing less than the expression of one man's vision toward the future...

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"FIRE IN THE FOREST"

Invites to enter an unlatched door,
A Rose urges to get smelled for more before;
The wick needs some oil to burn till four,
Fire in the forest and God still snores.

Butterflies and flowers play everywhere,
Man got crucified for he dared to bare;
Where's an onion after peeling the last layer,
Like smoke flies high to merge in the air.

The peacock in petrichor while it rains,
A mark of love bitten on time to remain;

After all without her what does he gain,
When an endless tunnel crosses the train.

Hands wait to meet again at twelve,
She's an insatiable ocean no body can delve;
Turned pages of picture album in the shelf,
The curiosity of a tool holds the helve.

An excerpt from 'Unofficial: The Basic Instinct'



Aakash Sagar Chouhan: He is a Rourkela-based, Odia nomad, restlessly scribbling since 2003. An undergraduate, indeed a college drop-out; but now he is a contributing Author, a blogger, a prose writer, a Poet, an article contributor, Group's Admin of many Pages and Communities. He has been a proud contributor to a few anthologies by International and Indian Poets; books named as "Unleash the undead, Wordplay: A Collection of

Diverse Poems From around the World, Feelings International, A Phase Unknown – II, Kamala Das – Yes I am a Woman and Purple Hues. Apart from pouring his thoughts and himself on virgin papers, during his leisure time, Aakash is an observer, a dreamer, a philosopher. He likes to strum his Guitar and sing. He also likes to play and brush colors on canvases.



CRACKED

Cracked to retrieve
the soft part inside,
the nutritious overflow
that rests open with
a broken shell and will
never regain its symmetry
or means of protection.

Cracked in the nearing Autumn,
fresh as the false dream
has been exposed,

and you realize

that anything true bends
its will to the moment,
relinquishing its authority
to a higher unknown agenda.

Sighs, sings and takes notes
under siege of the shifting
winds, underwater, happy
if it is able to rise
and sometimes float.



Allison Grayhurst: She is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Three times nominated for Sundress Publications “Best of the Net” 2015, she has over 850

poems published in over 380 international journals. She has twelve published books of poetry, seven collections, nine chapbooks, and a chapbook pending publication. She lives in Toronto with her family. She is a vegan. She also sculpts, working with clay; <http://www.allisongrayhurst.com/>



Dear One Step At a Time,
Haven't you heard of foresight?
Hindsight.

Dear Underpaying Client,
Every time I think of leaving you,
You come up with a project I cannot resist.
How about paying me more?
Ameeta Agnihotri.

Dear Ameeta Agnihotri,
Didn't you know all writers are underpaid?
Be thankful for what we give you.

Looking for someone new,

Your Ex-Client.

(Aside: and there ended a beautiful relationship thanks to Facebook and my overactive, underpaid brain)

Dear Yoga,

You must be good for me because you make me ache all over.

Sincere Yogi.



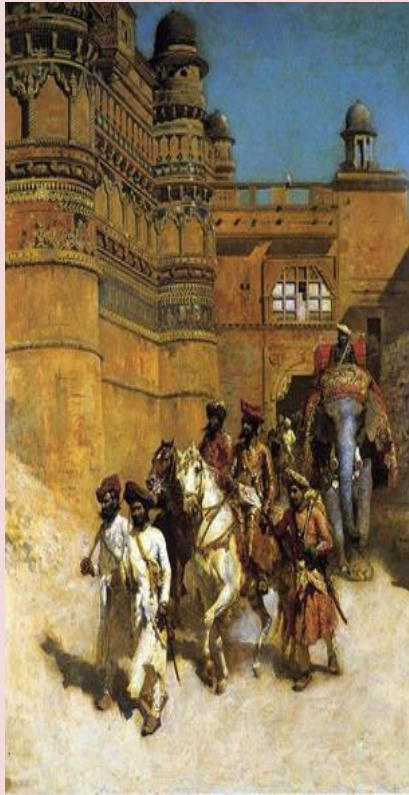
Ameeta Agnihotri: First of all, I love to write. Then I love to travel, and write about my travels, including about the food I eat on my blog. Being a Food Critic, I have four food books to my name: The Times Food and Nightlife Guide. My

restaurant reviews come out every Friday in the Chennai Times. Yes, life's good. My book is done. It was done five years ago. Am still trying to muster the courage to edit it.

Work: <http://timescity.com/chennai>

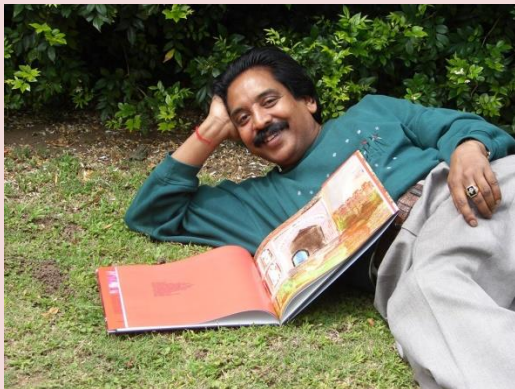
Blogs: <http://silentsensation.blogspot.com/>

<http://fascinatingtastes.blogspot.in/>



I had driven a jeep to the ravines
With you sitting next to me
The sun got stuck in the muddy undergrowth
Eyes that refused to leave you
On a countenance that strayed sometimes
It was so dry in an unforgiving moment
You spoke in syllables
Cracked by a turgid river
Of brigand

And horsemen
Sweeping past another time
Another place
A mound
Once ripped
Open a thought
When you whispered behind a veil
Memories remain a familiar hoof throb
Beating against an angry air
At night.



Amitabh Mitra: He is a Poet/Artist and a Medical Doctor at East London, East Cape, South Africa. He lives in many worlds and narrates his life in hallucinatory stopovers. Words and images tend to amalgamate in many such strange journeys.



LOST AND FOUND

When the clouds of doubts will part,
When the rays of hope will brighten your heart,
When your eyes will meet mine to never depart,
You will find me...

When the light of truth will enshrine in your
mind,
When out of pretence, your world will be true and
divine,
When love will lead you to me, straight out of time,
You will find me....

When the burden of sorrow will try to make you
lame,
When you'll think you are lost and not the same,
Trapped inside a circle if you still call my name,
You will find me....

And when we will meet, it will be like the wind
Dancing with fire,
You, me and the burning desire,
I always knew its true when you took me higher,
But still gave up to you and your denial,
Don't worry anymore, we haven't lost the time,
I am yours I know, you are forever mine,
Lets end this distance, dark days of separation,
Just hold onto me, everything would be fine,
When your heart will pound and take my name,
When you'll savour the peace, not the blame
When this wait would end and not in vain,
You will find me....

When you'll close your eyes and still see my face,
When you'll fly in dreams and think of ways
To break this maze and end this chase,
I'll sleep walk you by and won't leave a trace,
And you'll hear a voice that calls and says,
"Soak yourself in my embrace",
You've known this voice, you've missed for days,
You've felt this presence, you've tasted this fragrance,
Reach for your heart, just feel your breath
Just turn around and what you see,
Drenched in pain, finally you find me!!



Amit Bitra: Student of MBA, second year, Department of Management Sciences, Pune University (Pumba). He's

interested in reading, writing, and music, and plays the guitar.



Watching the patterns

how the sea to the shore always returns, yearning

a lone wolf at the moon always bays, sick with its longing

the emptiness gapes inside

escape, be set free

be not the woman always wailing for the moon

waiting for something that never comes

the knock on the door

stop being the branch that rattles insistently against the
closed, transparent window

or the breeze that caresses the cheek

remember

poetry may be power

but to you it is prayer

the beads of the rosary on your wrist

slipping gracefully through your fingers like mist

saying

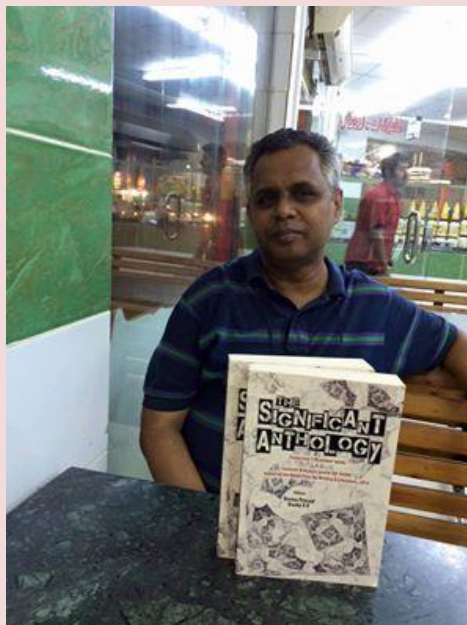
the two prayers taught to you by your mother

the cross and the steeple

while yet there was neither yearning nor longing

when there was the certainty of a bulwark against

luck, one which does not attend the dice's turn and twist



Ampat Koshy: He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Wrighteings: In Media Res, Figs, Allusions

to Simplicity (poetry), and co-author of Wake Up India: Essays for Our Times with Dr Bina Biswas and co-editor of The Significant Anthology with Reena Prasad and Michele Baron etc. He also runs The Significant League and has instituted the Reuel International Prize for Literature. He is a poet and critic and fiction writer of renown in India and abroad plus a Pushcart Prize Poetry Nominee of 2012. His Ph.D was on Samuel Beckett and his thesis was later published as Samuel Beckett's English Poetry: Transcending the Roots of Resistance in Language. He has also co-edited Inlinks and Umbilical Chords.



WHAT I MISS

The agony of summer sunburn

The abundance of bright light

The melody of drizzling rain of monsoon

The blitz of thunder and lightning flash

The cold breeze of the early winter

The chill of the wintry frost

The falling of yellowed leaves in autumn

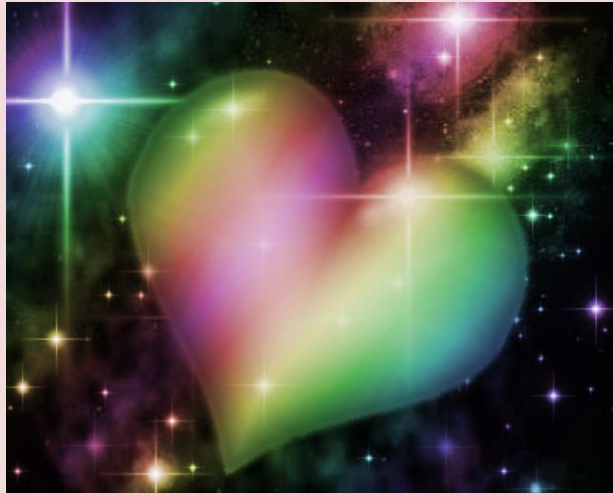
The birth of lush green in spring

I miss them all

When I am behind the corporate walls.



Anand Gautam: I am from Hyderabad. I studied life sciences; currently working as a techie, but my heart has always been inclined towards poetry and fiction. I often use simple words to write. I have to snatch some time from my daily life to write and I believe that one's passion must be kept alive to be alive. I occasionally blog at <https://notesandwords.wordpress.com/>



THE CURRENCY OF LIFE

Most moments are precious
Like a cascade of gemstones
The days are like sparkling diamonds
And the weeks glitter like gold

As the months turn to platinum
The years are blessed
Beyond earthly treasures.

Life is enriched
Living in ecstasy
A recurring dream

Like Joseph's coat
Of many colours
I dance with my mind
Through silvery streams
A pre-ordained destiny
The pleasures unfold
Every moment treasured

Be true to yourself
Be the real you
Forget the masques,
Charades and facades
Choose your currency
In life's journey
Measured by the heart.



Angela Chetty: is a HR Manager, an avid poet and lyricist who lives in Durban, South Africa. Angela imbibes her work with a deep passion and belief that words can touch hearts and change lives. The depths of her soulful prose, cuts across different genres, talking to matters of the heart. Poetry is music for my soul; like oxygen, the breath of my life. In 2013, an Anthology of Poetry entitled, Heartfelt moments - A Treasure Trove was published. www.heartfeltmomentspoetry.com In 2015, her poem "Miss Me" was selected as Editor's choice for the Contemporary Poetry Digest and has been chosen as the best poems of 2015 for a Valentine's Special Publication. Her poem "Heart and Soul" has been selected as Publisher's choice for the Evergreen Journal of Poetry. Angela has been selected as an Elite Poet for 2016 and will be published in the Yearbook of Poetry. Her poems have also been chosen as semi-finalist for International Poetry Contests.



FLOW

Blow into me the cool
Breeze of the winter
Kiss my lips with love
Let me taste your flavor

Show me the soft light
As emerges behind hills
Hold my face tight, let
Saliva flow as hot rills

Clouds move in bunches
Hiding the sun often

Rub me with your skin
As sweat acts as a lotion

Drooping flowers rise up
At the touch of soft ray
Hold me with your thighs
Drag me into the play

Petals open up one by one
Getting sun's soothing heat
Take me deep into you till
You burst wetting the sheet



Anil Kumar Panda: My name is Anil Kumar Panda. Tiku is my pen name. I was born in a small town, Brajrajnagar, in the state of Odisha, in India. I am currently residing here. I work as a mine surveyor in coal mines. I write short stories and poems whenever I get time.



WISHES

Wish I was the speakers,
Of your stereo
You're turning me on,
As only you know
Wish I was the dress,
That you wore
Clinging' to every pore
Wish I was the stars in your eyes,
And I wish I had a thousand lives
Even then I'd be wishing for more,
For you're the one whose heart doors
Are always open

Wish I was the dimple in your cheeks,
Every time you smiled I'd take a peek
Wish I was the clock on your handset,
I'd remind you of every time we met
Wish I was the sob story you read,
Instead of your tears wish I had bled
I wish I was the pain in your heart,
Then at least I'd know we'd never part



Anurag Mathur: He is a trained bean counter, works for a financial services group and has spent almost 2 decades serving that industry. Whatever little time that has been spared from work or sleep or reflective meditation has – with quite a few well-meaning prods and nudges from friends – been devoted to occasionally tapping to the Muse's dictats from time to time.



'THE HOLLOW MEN'-REVISITED

'This is the dead land

This is cactus land'-T.S.Eliot

We grow old ,we grow old

We act on what we are told.

Forgot when the soul is sold.

Conscience crippled and cold.

Embraced things aren't real ,

Yet we pretend to be factual.

Skilful in the art of illogically logical,

Worshipping cunning canonical.

Striving tactfully to detach

From things we should attach

Desperate to be attached,
With things to be detached.
We understand all.
Yet can't resist the call.
Soul turned into awl,
Within us doggies bawl.



Avik Kumar Maiti: (email - itzakm@gmail.com) He is a poet and writer from Midnapore. He is a permanent ESL teacher at Belda Gangadhar Academy, West Bengal. He likes to travel, explore the locale with cultures, to drink life to the lees', passion in humanity and drenched in literature. He believes that God is there and one day everything will be fine again. He believes in the flame eternal that is within us, which may cause a miracle with just a sympathetic touch.



A STATE OF HAPPINESS

(I)

A smile stretches across my boundary,
As if in definition of my character,
In flight with thoughts that depart,
To touch a higher level of my thinking,
Beyond reach of my eyes,
Blind in abundance, yet bright
In the darkness of my mind.

Reflections, like a whisper, linger,
Wash ashore in my island of retreat,
Hither and thither, scattered, disordered,

Groping for light in a blind man's dream,
I delve deep in the comprehension,
Of the other parts of happiness,
Harbored at unlikely ports.

(II)

Someday I will go to him,
Pointed cap bracing his curvature,
A lid on the brim of superfluity,
Housing the remains of a once abundant mane,
In search of the reason for the smile,
peeking over the shoulders of his ruins,
In his state of happiness.

Someday I will ask Raju,
Wearing his peat brown head mildly,
On his proud shoulders,
Walking through the dense gathering,
Of the babu moshais boasting a royal lineage,

Through pan stained teeth, that hardly
Let a meaning escape from its hold,

Walking, as though the wind blew his bidding,
Staining the ambience with a hue
to compliment the character his teeth had adopted.

With no apparent reverence to the “nobility”
That was dotting the otherwise bland simplicity.
Walking, talking, mocking this feigned happiness
That dressed the smiles of this “nobility”.

Someday I will ask Raju,
Proud; arrogance riding the tip of a caustic mouth
that Haddock would have been proud of!

Never a good word to spare for the
denizens, inhabiting more of some royalty,
than the ground beneath their feet.
Yet, a smile unlike feigned happiness.

(III)

Lahiri confounds me to equal extent.

Fresh from the orchards of Maldah,
Where he sells mangoes at a dozen for five,
now in Kolkata to meet some distant cousin,
who, through Lahiri's profits, remembered that
Lahiri was as much a part of existence as himself,
Lahiri just happy at the acknowledgement.

I met him, (though Lahiri went back to Maldah
without the benefits of the reciprocal), on the way
to the Indian Museum on a 3C/1, which by itself,
was relic enough to catch the museum's eye,
his pristine, bucolic bangla at a loss for words
To translate the wonders that Maldah did not boast of,
Although my observation did not derive the same awe,

At the sight of the museum building.
Stonehearted lions roaring through its mighty bosom,
Carrying a time, two score times less than,
When my great-grandma played in her mother's lap.
Its forehead bearing the name of someone
now dreaming in his English grave,
Dreaming of the legacy that he had carved.

Lahiri, open-mouthed, eyes gaping at the
“magnificence” of the structure, reposing in its serenity,
not subject to much awe, except for the beggar,
who fetched more alms here than at the dark alley,
much to my surprise and indignation at not having
looked beyond the mundane, which Lahiri viewed
like the eighth wonder of the world.

(IV)

Happiness: my mystery, my question.
I have failed in the quest of an all encompassing

comprehension of this state of mind, that makes
one eye laugh with joy the tears the other sheds.

Why the old man smiles through defiant ruin,
Holding fort a happiness that seems to
the strange eye more to the contrary. Why?

Why Raju, wearing his peat brown head
mildly on his proud shoulders, not a penny
to fill in the void that his pants strained to fill,
wore a smile, where frowns would better habit.
Yet, Raju, happier than most who had more pennies
Than needed to feed their desires,
In his state of happiness.

Lahiri confounds me yet,
With his display of confused delight at the very sight,
Which when seen through my understanding,
Remained a relic, merely left behind,

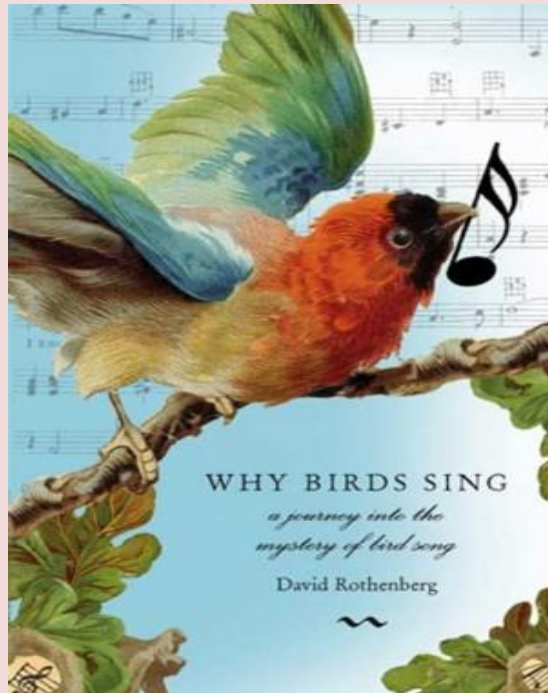
Too heavy for the Channel to bear upon its chest.

At day end, I remain I, even as

Lahiri, Raju and the old man smile at my misfortune.



Avishek Ramaswamy Aiyar: I was born and brought up in pristine Calcutta and lived the first 18 years of my life there before moving to Chennai for my undergraduate education. I eventually moved to the US, where I completed my doctoral studies in Chemical Engineering. I currently work as a Sr. Scientist at Illumina in San Diego, sunny California.



ARE THE BIRDS SINGING?

I have not checked of late
Those memories that would me agitate.
In sorrow and confusion wrought
Brought forth by a disappointment born.

My elation today aired
Grievances buried and a fresh renewal of flair.
Indeed, those birds sang alright
And I was right to take my flight.

This bird was from her cage expelled
Wings clipped and murderously repelled.
A spirit torn from her token of expression
A talisman of doom in a husband of misrepresentation.

Bereft of hope she often spoke
Languorous listing in a burrowed moat.
Moans of sadness would her heart throttle
Choking sobs buttressed as in a brothel.

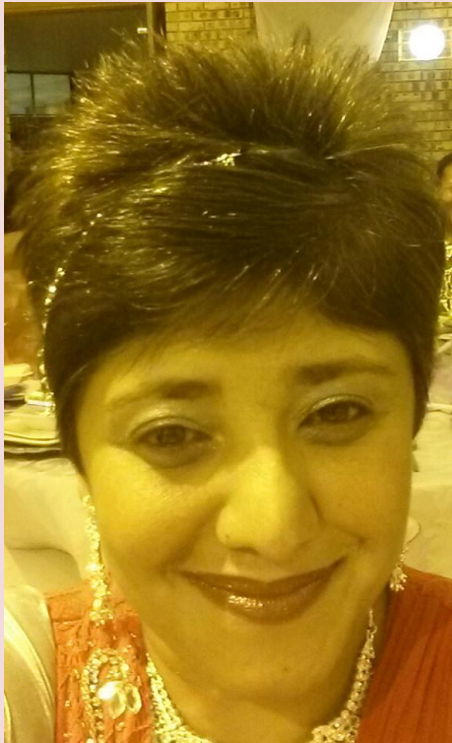
Departure from conventional norm was difficult to resist
Marriage torn and divorce in the crib.
The birth of an entity with an investment in self
Who dared to dispel the myth of she who sits on the shelf.

Merry melody and gurgles of giggles
Resonate rich in goblets of tickles.

Flutes flutter in a steady frenzy -
For wings to flap with urgency.

Jubilant in her journey she charts a cause -
Navigating ambition through discourse.
Of education in lessons on love lost
Despair not and possessed of a courageous plot.

Birds of sing in their euphony
Sing sentiment sweet in their symphony.
Harmonious is her composition -
Sound in emotion and mental disposition.



Bilkis Moola: She is an Educator who works as a Head of Department in Languages at a school in Vukuzakhe, a township located in Volksrust, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Her first published anthology, *“Wounds and Wings: A Lyrical Salve Through Metaphor”* was received throughout South Africa and launched her poetic persona. It evolved as an introspective quest for recovery from her personal narrative of an abusive marriage. She presently divides her time between professional responsibilities and postgraduate studies in Education. Her pen continues to sketch the flotsam in her mind from the passion in her heart on shreds of paper that bloom into poems.



BUDDHA IN THE BEDROOM

In his bedroom, cigarette smoke swirled upward
I had a vision of the graying Buddha
With his loose hair exposed to the whims of a whirlwind.

Slowly, one by one,
Eight fuming cigarette butts dumped into the ashtray.
Relishing the third drink, ninth cigarette, fingers and lips,
Made no attempt to assert the masculine presence.
I assured the Buddha:
It is just a few hours of togetherness,
Not a rope of binding desire.

Gulping smoke-currents, droned the air-conditioner
Toothed wheels of the clock turn
Eight spokes don't take things further!
I felt a nagging terror,
The clock might chime thirteen times; then stop ticking
forever.

The ninth stub in the ashtray; an empty packet in the bin,
A grating pause, deadlock, twelve at night
I feared, with the tenth cigarette, the man might etch his
wrath on my skin

Smoke-stained hands grabbed my shadowy form,
As I took in the smell of death from his lips
The room grew cold as a morgue
We exuded no warmth, no life!

I was a woman lost among tall cacti-
Fantasizing about a bodhi tree

A trunk to lean against and daydream
To discover the routes to enlightenment

The tenth cigarette burnt to ashes
A forest full of bodhi trees.



Bini B.S.: She is currently a post-doctoral fellow at Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda, Gujarat. Her research articles, poems and translations have appeared in national and international Journals and anthologies including Poetry Chain, Kritiya, Samyukta, ETC: A Review of General Semantics, JWS: A Journal of Women's Studies, DUJES, South Asian Ensemble, Kavyabharati , Korzybski And... (published by the Institute of General Semantics), The Virtual Transformation of the Public Sphere (Routledge), and General Semantics: A

Critical Companion. She is the editor of Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought and the Managing Editor of JCT (Journal of Contemporary Thought). Her poems were part of an anthology of corporeal poems titled A Strange Place Other than Earlobes: Five Poets, Seventy Voices published by Sampark, Calcutta in 2014. She is the winner of the 2016 J. Talbot Winchell award for the contributions in general semantics, which she received in a ceremony in New York on October 21, 2016.



RIOT

Silent is the basti today

A few children roamed about

Yesterday there were guns

A soldier in military fatigue

Walked up and down the street

And the children followed him

There were stalls selling motor parts,

Flowers for the temple ahead

Where devotees lined up in queues on festival days

And offered marigold garlands to Shivling

The thirst the soldier felt
Was quenched by the plastic bottle in his hip pocket
But he crept about looking for the rioters
His talking gun slung from his shoulder
A crowd suddenly formed, he was shoved
People jostled, spoke in a sea of many tongues
He leapt and took out the gun, aimed
The fire was smoke
And his interlocutor backed off, the red seeping into his
kurta
Just then a siren and the child looked at the soldier and
cried



Bristi Manjima Bandyopadhyay: Hi, I am Bristi Manjima Bandyopadhyay from Delhi and like penning poetry. I am a content writer and editor by profession, a part-time versifier by inclination. Hope you enjoy my poem.



DEATH

Die of Hunger

horrible death

as infant

bad and sad

in sleep

comfortable

in the womb

an insult to God

may call him by any name.



Chandramohan Naidu: He is a retired bank employee, now a freelance writer and photographer based in Chennai, part of the poetry circle which meets first Wednesday of every month. I am writing poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.



WE ARE WOMEN.

We are women
underneath.

We can't be bought with big houses,
with fine furniture and luminous lights.

It's a pity
that we as women
have to 'march' to show
that we deserve respect.

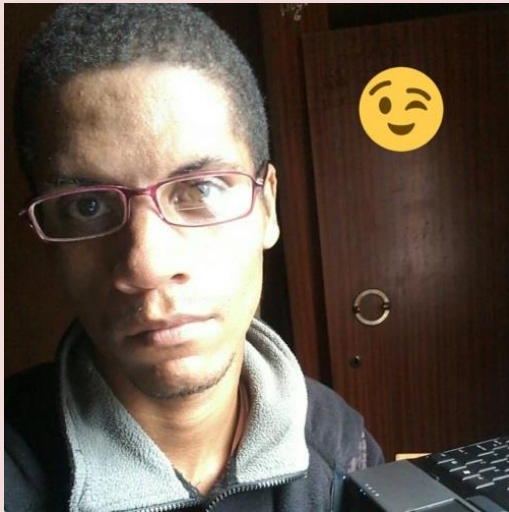
We have families.

If we are allowed to speak,
we can be more,
we can do more.

Make-up and beauty tips,
these don't define who we are.

We are women
underneath.

#16DaysOfActivism



Chestlyn Draghoender: He is a young South African poet based in Cape Town. His writings have appeared in numerous literary journals, online and print. Chestlyn is passionate about music and literature.



HOLDING BABY JESUS

Let me hold you baby Jesus,
Let me kiss your hot soft cheek
Do not cry now as you greet us
Sweet darling boy whom wise men seek.

Mary is exhausted, smiling
At her marvel sent from heaven,
At your big bright eyes beguiling
Better than world's wonders seven.

Ox and donkey your angels keep
Vigil in this holy stable
Well now my boy I'll let you sleep
And I'll pray as best I'm able.

I did not deserve to hold you
But still you let me precious child
I shall do my best to serve you
Let me become your own dear child.

Christopher Villiers



Christopher Villiers: I am freelance writer in the United Kingdom, with a Master's degree in Theology, who writes about God, Love and the Universe, big things in little poems! You can see more of my poetry on my Facebook page.



HAIL

A few hail falls on the lawn have calligraphed my black pupil into a word

where a rose just lost a petal, for a crystal.

I named it 'mirror'. Love just got replaced but not damaged in my eye.

A few moments ago, the droplets on the pane was my sweat.

The air was thick. A thousand skins got sucked into unseen waves.

Yes, they were vapours, as evaporation is always for a purpose called 'you'

as you don't precipitate in bodies but souls.

The sky is still black with a few cracks. It is a desert too, but more responsible.

Or else cactuses wouldn't have been those dried teeth, my tongue feels each morning.

The frozen pebble has just melted and I am short of a petal; a poem.

You take away what you give.

I close the porch and enter. My pupil has
you in an after-rain
in an emptied glass. On the edge,
a frosted lip hangs.



Daipayan Nair: Born in the year 1988 in a town named Silchar in Assam, India, he is a freelance writer, author,

poet, surrealist and admin of a few active groups on social media platforms. He writes poetry on an array of subjects. His poems have been published in quite a few international as well as national magazines and anthologies. He has also been awarded a few prizes including the recent Reuel International Prize For Poetry 2016. His recently published book containing his collection named 'The Frost', a bouquet of lyrical poems, has gathered positive reviews from many spheres. He has also invented a new poetry form in the field of creative writing called 'The Tideling'.



THE KING OF THE HOUSE

In Valledado, Segovia, to a woman from quarter
God gave his grace: she just had seven daughters

And she was about to give birth

Without knowing if it would be son or daughter.

The day of nativity play revealed the difference

And the village people said "that impossible"

They could not believe it

After being born so much females

That they should come and see him.

They came to meet him and see if he was a boy.

They congratulated the father and mother

Worshiping the child as a king.
Little girls, when they saw him, said smiling:
"The Little sailor stand out
And his two ships loaded with gold and silver".
They say that pigeons peeked out their window
And the bells of the parish church
Played with joy alone
And Sacristan said: "Not for less."
The medieval clergyman
Who came with his concubine
Exclaimed: "A good combine harvester
For the Village."



Daniel de Culla (1955): He is a writer, poet, and photographer. He is also a member of the Spanish Writers Association, Earthly Writers International Caucus, Director of the Gallo Tricolor Review, and Robespierre Review. He's moving between North Hollywood, Madrid and Burgos, Spain.



DANCING IN THE RAIN

(dedicated to Glory, who dances in the rain)

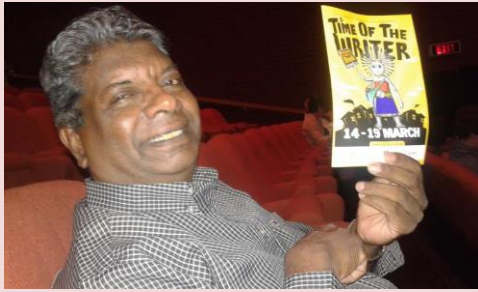
woke up this morning
with sleep still in my head
outside its raining
switched on the radio
heard the weatherman say
I should stay in bed
there is no blue skies
no sunshine to keep you warm
the monsoons are here to stay
you better learn to live with the rain,
instead of waiting for the sun

learn to dance in the rain,
the sun will never come today
you got to be like a child again
to relish the joys of life
so the good book says
I'll get the rain on my skin
I'm ready for the day to begin
along with the sunshine
there got to be a little storm sometimes
I, don't, mind
dancing and singing in the rain

sentenced to work in a dead end job
from nine to five
trapped by four walls
in a dingy corporate cubicle hell
when the world is in darkness and asleep
then to work I go

to be on the graveyard shift
any chance you get, to be
a millionaire or a billionaire
is as remote as landing on the stars

life is a glacier floating on thin ice
raindrops and teardrops
feel like the same thing
don't drown in a waterfall of sorrows
let's be free and drop your worries
and dance through the pain
leave all the cares behind
and be a child again
and dance, dance in the rain



Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny: He is an Indian born, and brought up in South Africa. He has been fascinated by, and writing poetry since his early boyhood. He has performed his poetry at various forums, including the Poetry Africa Festival, the Mauritian Writers' Association, and Glorioustimes, India. He is the Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa.



EMILY AS MY SHADOW STIFLES A COUGH

Out of my body

& in my body

& a projection

of my body

holding in

to swallow what

could be Emily,

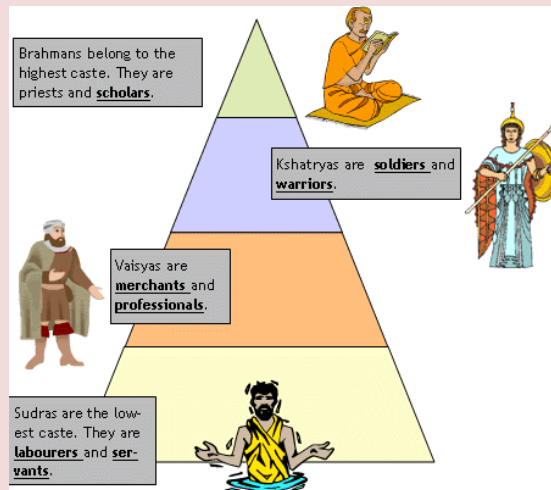
I have watched

every version

of my physical
self be willing
to choke on her.



Darren C. Demaree: He is the author of five poetry collections, most recently “The Nineteen Steps Between Us” (2016, After the Pause Press). He is the Managing Editor of the Best of the Net Anthology and Ovenbird Poetry. He is currently living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.



THE IMPERIAL CASTE SYSTEM

Throughout history, conquerors have used various forms of the 'caste' system to 'legally' impose an inferior status on the conquered while elevating themselves to a status of privilege.

The Romans conferred citizenship on the collaborators among the conquered and others

while keeping the rest in the 'caste' of slavery and semi slavery.

During feudal times the serf 'caste' had little in the way of human rights while the conquerors,

whether they were Normans, Teutons or Turks kept the 'conquered caste' in a state of semi slavery. It is a despicable system.

India contributed to the triumph over Germany in two World Wars. Unfree India, through the valour of millions of Indian soldiers and the manufacture of millions of weapons, helped keep Britain free.

This knowledge had been kept from us in South Africa. However, the Indian caste system had divided the Indian soldiery. Light skinned conquerors had designated the dark skinned conquered as 'untouchables'

The 'legal' system imposed by the conquerors forced the conquered into the 'caste' of slavery or semi slavery and disenfranchisement. Invaders who often espoused 'democracy' kept the conquered in the 'caste' of subservience by using undemocratic means. Slavery was legal in the British empire till 1834. The system of slavery was 'legal' right into the second half of the 19th century in many parts of our planet including the USA (till 1865) and in the Dutch empire.

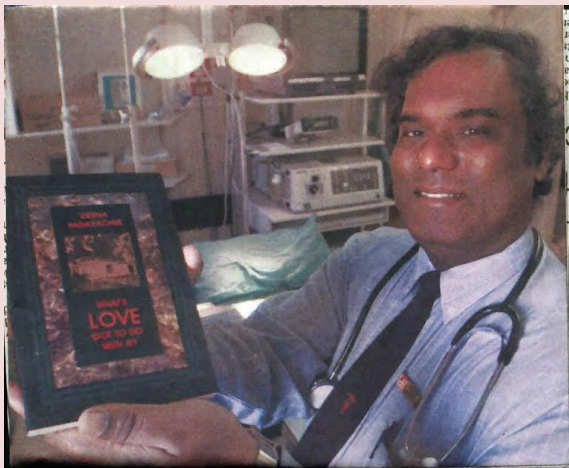
I find it disingenuous for the conquerors to constantly highlight the caste system that eviscerated people

in countries that they had invaded, while they themselves had been enslaving human beings, usually on a racial, genetic basis and keeping them in a subservient 'caste'.

The Apartheid system designated people to belong to certain 'castes' according to their race and deprived them of human rights.

There are many forms of the 'caste' system still existing among many peoples,

none of which deserve respect.



Deena Padayachee: He has been awarded both the Olive Schreiner and the Nadine Gordimer prizes for prose. In 1987 he published a book of poems called A Voice from the Cauldron. His short stories are featured in a few anthologies, including Jonathan Ball's A Century of South African short stories, Penguin's Modern South African short stories, Reader's Digest's Best South African short stories and the University of Cambridge's New South African short stories. Wasafiri, Crux and Skive have published his poems.



THE DANCING GIRL

On an autumn dawn,
The sun reposed the carpet of glitter,
She saw the wine grapes and chestnuts ceremonialize,
While sunflower and brash scarlet enchanted the tune.
She heeded the music,
She grappled and fondled and tickled the rhythm,
Her feet were high, her toes were swirling
Her nape was swaying.
She danced to the melody of nature,
She danced with the madness, she danced in a rosiness,

She danced in the wonderland like no one is watching,
She danced for his peck in lush green fields..



Devyani Deshmukh: She is pursuing master's degree in computer science at US. I am highly interested in writing. This poem is nothing but a fictional work. It shows the plight of a girl who is broken in love and made to keep distance from him.



PUFFED RICE AND THE HALF-DARK ROOM

1

In the half-dark room, shadows played on the walls,
Lit only by candles, mystery thickened in the minds.

Two brothers, squatting on the floor

Ate puffed rice with onion and cucumber, served by the
mother.

All of a sudden, bright light would fill the room,

As the father stepped in, power would be restored.

It was a routine almost every evening,

When load-shedding was part of our world.

The father was like that, brightened up everyone's life.

2

The mother was somewhat prepared to hear the news,

The messenger was unable to speak, but she understood.

She quietly packed up a duffel bag and ordered the
brothers to dress up,

To visit their ancestral home, to perform the last rites.

3

There was a big crowd at the crematorium,

Most were silent in grief; few cried incessantly.

The brothers were scared,

When their father's body was rolled inside the electric
furnace,

Feeling the loss for the first time, they burst into tears.

4

The half-dark room was unchanged, every evening,

As load-shedding continued to be a part of life.

But the brothers ate puffed rice with onion only,

There was little money to buy the cucumber.

5

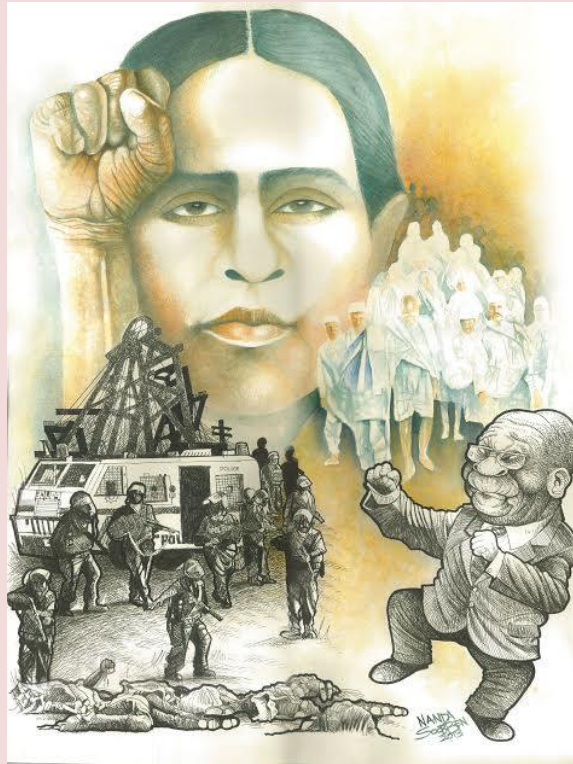
The mother hardly spoke thereafter ever,
Did her chores in silence, like someone dead in the mind.
No one had a clue what made her ill soon after,
She just lost her life slowly over a year.

6

The brothers found a shelter in the house of a good man
They ate puffed rice with onions and cucumber again.
But they never found the taste, that they used to have,
In the half-dark room, where shadows played on the walls,
And mystery thickened in the minds.



Dipankar Sarkar: He is on a continuous journey to discover himself and the mystery called life. He remains an eternal optimist with a never-ending zeal, in spite of the many battles that he has lost and few that he has won.



VALLIAMMA 'THILLAIYADI' MANUSWAMI MUDALIAR

My village name is Thillaiyadi – Born in South Africa in 1898

I am proud of

my Tamil heritage – My seventy seven million people now
scattered globally

I can say proudly we are one of the largest and oldest of
existing ethno-linguistic

groups of people in this modern age – Some in Sri-lanka,
India, Mauritius,

Singapore and Malaysia and most of us are proud to be
Hindu – What about you?

Teenage Revolutionary – I might have been a carefree teenager but my spirit was
conflicted with what my young eyes witnessed – How those like me or of a darker
even mixed skin hue were oppressed suppressed racially addressed spat at made
to feel invisible just for a political racial thrill but my mood although misunderstood
was a silent revolution although no innocent illusion to avoid any confusion.

The march in October 1913 – At sweet sixteen I illegally bravely walked with
mothers from Transvaal to Natal no matter how fatal – We had no choice to give
targeted workers there a voice against the three pound tax the social cracks – For
that I was incarcerated to three months hard labour – No authoritarian surprise

decision at Pietrmaritzburg prison but I fell ill refusing early release – Master

of my own liberty keys although ultimately perished – I marched for you...

Ghandi's epitaph – Here lies brave Valliamma the first true Satyagrahi, fighting

with the force of truth – Certainly not just a footnote in history I hope you agree?

I asked her did she repent going to jail and she answered – Who would not love to

die for one's motherland? She who had no proud flag to hoist, raised her orange

white and green sari in a revolutionary marching hurry which now still waves within

the Indian flag, so how can we be sad? A symbol for equity equality and justice!

My country still groans – From blue mountain to azure sea
the country my soul left

still whispers her woes to me – Each stone and brick
sharing today's social revolution

historic – They speak of gravy trains feeding political fatcats
steered by a demi-god

crowned zuma who deserted earth's workers at Marikana,
of trigger happy minions

firing iron deadly darts through respectful hearts – A
husband father and son bleeding velvet

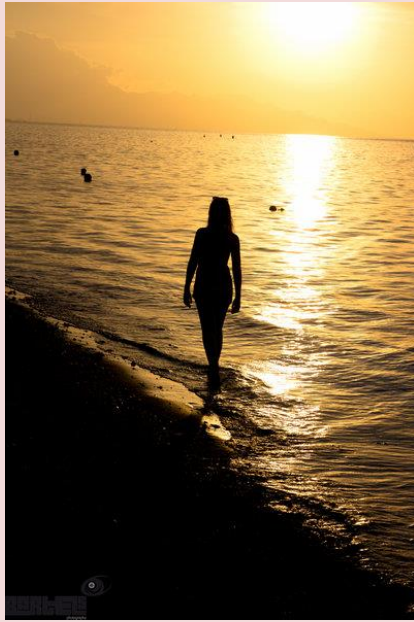
red under a celestial burning sun, of a nation indeed the
world utterly stunned – Their

voices float in these realms so remote – My prayers are
theirs so raise your liberty flares

and remember me in the breath of the Jakaranda tree – My
name is Valliamma...



Don Beukes: He is a retired teacher of English and Geography now writing poetry. Originally from Cape Town, South Africa, where he was born, raised and educated in the last two decades of Apartheid, he taught in both South Africa and the UK for twenty years and hold EU citizenship. As a person of 'mixed race' heritage, his poetry reflects the racial and cultural battles growing up in a racially divided society and indeed as a global citizen and hopes to adjust our moral compass. He also writes about the socio-political, life and death, womanhood, nature and religion.



breeze stops

sands gather dust

waves freeze

shells catch rust

Sun refuses to give in

to the ocean's lust

I wait for you on the shore

fire in my trust



Gauri Dixit: She is a software professional from Pune, India. She is an avid reader and regularly writes in poetry groups on Facebook. Her poems have been published in 3 anthologies. Her poems were featured in the Poet's Corner for the E-zine 'Mind Creative' published from Sydney Australia and Learning and Creativity e magazine. She has also co-edited a mini anthology for TSL and Different Truths for the Refugee Day.



The fire test.

Was it real? Or verbal?

Or both?

A heap of hurting words

Looking for purity!

Yet she emerged pure,

Unharmd, untroubled, untouched,

Trusting love to save

On unsure grounds.

But again they failed.

A legendary fire extinguished.

This world is beyond repair!
It sings sad songs eternally
Breaking the violin strings in pain.
Unbearable to the ears
Of loving souls in despair.



Geeta Varma: She has been a teacher for thirty years and a Freelance journalist. She is now an Educational Consultant and writes for Deccan Herald. She enjoys working with children and has conducted many creative workshops. Her interests include music, reading, writing (poems and stories for children) and travelling. She is married to Shreekumar Varma (Writer and Novelist) and has two sons, Vinayak and Karthik and a daughter-in-law daughter Yamini. She lives in Neelankarai, Chennai.



A NANO SIP OF PEACE

When in silence, peace visits, palpable within yourself,
When all the noises of self-made clamour dies down,
When you know you are a fragment of all that surrounds,
When you sit with yourself and watch your breath come in
laps and waves,
Sometimes galloping with the mares of exuberance,
Sometimes trotting in a cadence, whose music is only
audible to you,
Sometimes sauntering in the quiet you have earned,
That moment!
That moment open your eyes all at once dear heart ,

See the light that caresses everything where your eyes can reach,

Even beyond envisioning, where it cannot,

Everything gleams and shimmers in a pulse and purpose meant to touch truth,

Where the unseen spirit of all of existence breathes with you,

This and this alone fulfills you being a witness to your own purpose,

And doubts of how and why settle in a fine dust on your coffee table,

Let it rest there till the dawn throws its light,

When even dust reminds you that you can sit still!



Geethanjali Dilip: A Chennaiite at heart, she is a graduate from Ethiraj College and a postgraduate in French from Bangalore University. She is passionate about poetry, travel, teaching travel, gardening, interior decoration, and enjoying a deep spiritual connection with everything. She's been teaching French, freelance, in Salem for the past 34 years in schools and colleges, and at her centre, Zone Francophone, in Salem. Her family includes her husband, Dilip Narsimhan, daughter, Manasa, son-in-law, Ajay, granddaughter, Aarushi, and her parents.



A SEA OF COCAINE

I am still

Listening

With my eyes

My ears are no good

For it is all

Andaluciano

Here

And my Spanish

Is lame and

Limping

So, it's my eyes

I use

And I have spotted

A lot of drugs
That I never knew anything about
Before
Because the drugs dealers
Are impotent
I presume
But I don't know
How corrupt Spain is
And the drugs come in
From North Africa
To all the big ports
Whence they pass
In fast cars
North
But I don't know
I only think
The oranges grow on
Trees

Around here
But the people
Do not pick them
Because they are wild
And bitter
And lie rotting
In the ground
Like Spain
Which rots
With drugs
In a sea of cocaine



Geoffrey Jackson: He has been an intrepid TESOL instructor at 5 universities and 4 colleges, blown off course from England to Holland, Finland, Hungary, Oman, Saudi Arabia

and, in the Roaring Forties, to Denmark. A self-described European cosmotrollop and Americanophile with New World dreams, Geoff is the Poetry Editor for Fullosia Press.



DEAR USHA - IN 2017

dear Usha

in 2017, it's all back in time

the sun just rose in the west

doesn't mean it's not dawning

see i'm not yawning

i'm out of bed

and calling you instead

maybe you ordered cake

and was served bread

red can be pink

which makes me think

red is pink

in 2017

milestones can be homeward

kissing can be a bite

laughing can be silence

demonetizing can be right

unravelling can be knitting

democracy can be a dump

shuffling cards can be a winner

when the winner's name is trump

oh yes!

the sun rises in the west

in 2017

and i can put it to test

'cause each time you say you don't love me

all i hear

is "i love you, you're the best."



Glory Sasikala: She is a poet and writer, currently residing in Chennai. She is the editor and publisher of GloMag. She also brings out a weekly magazine of her personal writing called, “Say Hi To Glory”

<https://www.instamojo.com/Glory/>



LIVELY LOVE!

Your love is something more ,
Powerful than even a lion's roar,
Echoes its symphony on an ocean's shore,
Your Lively Love is something more!

Drizzles itself on my heart's core,
Happens to mollify all its sore,
Embracing all my feelings of abhor,
Your Lively Love is something more!

Aura pacifying my emotion's war,

Warmth so delicate to fill the pore,
Touch so deep , touching my gore,
Your lively love is something more!

My strains and pains are no more,
When your soothing love acts from its lore,
My happiness gets multiplied by four,
Your Lively Love is something more!

Certainty on this Earth to score,
When we unite and adore,
With an instinct to move fore,
Your Lively Love is something more!

Azure Sky gleaming bounties in its ore,
All problems and difficulties tend to ignore,
Opening for me -the composed door,
Your Lively Love is something more!

Your deep love brimming life even in tore,
Nourishing them with a natural rore,
On an affection faceted floor,
Your Lively Love is something more!

We seem more united as the years on wore,
Clusters of lovely radiation in thor,
Latent and new temptations to explore,
Your Lively Love is something more!

Exultation of your love forever to bore,
Ethnicity sprinkling since times of yore,
Crafting the charisma in tats of crore,
Your Lively Love is something more!

Your love is something more,
Has a different tinge of gloire,

Melting all the emotions so frore,
Your Lively Love is something more!



Jayant Singhal: A voracious reader and an enraptured author, Jayant Singhal, under the animated pseudonym of 'Saaransh'. He began nurturing the passion for expressing the enchanted aura of the world through his pen just a few months ago. Having a strong affinity for English language, he loves to feel the imbuing effect of it. He is currently writing a Facebook page, "Aroma - The Essence of Life". Dazzling through the twists and turns of this beautiful voyage, commonly known as 'Life', he is en route to the bewitching nature of happiness and peace.



TONIGHT

Chimes tap against our
windowpane. This evening
becomes starry sapphire
as sea gulls rise in
flight over rooftops.

Winds wrapping around
trees tossing leaves.

The court yard is full of
aromas from dinnertime.
Shadows growing longer

each minute. Lights go
on and I wait for you.



Joan McNerney: Her poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze, Blueline, and Halcyon Days. Three Bright Hills Press Anthologies, several Poppy Road Review Journals, and numerous Kind of A Hurricane Press Publications has accepted her work. Her latest title is Having Lunch with the Sky and she has four e-books. She has been nominated three times for Best of the Net.



WHY DO WE HATE?

Why do we hate:

People who are of a colour different from ours,

People with slanting eyes and high cheekbones,

People with curly hair and broad noses,

People with brown skin and sunken eyes.

People who wear cloth wound around their loins,

People who wear colourful turbans and grow hair,

People with exquisite and lush beards,

People who wear leather sandals.

People who eat noisily from leaves,

People who dance and sing freely,

People who talk with gestures and interjections,

People who walk in the wild without shoes.

People with distracted looks who create beauty,
People who learn and teach others about life,
People with a begging bowl and hungry looks,
People who build homes with cardboard and plastic.
People who sleep on streets in the cold and rain,
People with nothing to call their own, no loved ones,
People who hate just for the sake of hating someone,
Our parents who teach us all we know and to walk and talk.



John P. Matthew: Writer, poet, singer-songwriter, and blogger John P Matthew was born in the state of Kerala, India. His first success as a writer was Penguin's world-wide short story contest "India Smiles" in which his short story "Flirting in Short Messages" was selected for publication in

an anthology. His poem “Call of the Cuckoo” has been published by Poetry Rivals. He is working on his first novel and writing a book-length travelogue about his native state of Kerala.



I would have said many times about P G Wodehouse being an influence as great as Shammi Kapoor and O P Nayyar in my growing up years. I've always held that if you were brought up on a heady cocktail of P G Wodehouse, Shammi Kapoor and O P Nayyar, you would end up celebrating all your failures.

Here's young Madeline Bassett talking to Bertie Wooster, whom she considers to be her alternate suitor whenever she breaks off an engagement because she thinks he's perpetually in love with her.

Bertie is a lazy member of London's idle rich living on inherited wealth, waking up daily at almost noon with a hangover curable only by a secret cocktail concoction fixed by his intelligent knowledgeable and resourceful valet Jeeves, who would always save his master from

complicated engagements with aristocratic girls unsuitable for his laid back bachelor life.

Madeline is a spiritually inclined pretty girl in a droopy, blonde, saucer-eyed way, physically in the pin-up class, with blonde hair, attractive curves, and all the fixings, to be considered in balance with her personality, which is that of the soppiest, mushiest, most childish and whimsical, sentimentalist young gawd-help-us that ever was prone to saying seriously in casual conversations that every time a fairy sheds a tear, a new star appears in the Milky Way, and that the stars are God's daisy chain, in keeping with her general conversational style, which is all too apt to revolve around elves, gnomes, flowers, god, angels, souls, heaven, afterlife and small furry animals indicative of a degree of excessive soppieness working in tandem with an impressive attitude of self-centered idealism, which she tries to impose on others, for instance, by insisting that one of her future husbands take up vegetarianism.

The novel is "The Mating Season", in which this dialogue happens, narrated by Bertie in first person singular.

(Quote)

"Oh Bertie, Do you read Rosie M Banks' novels? Shall I tell you the story of Mervyn Keene?"

"Do."

"He was young and rich and handsome, an officer in the Coldstream Guards and the idol of all who knew him. Everybody envied him."

"I don't wonder, the lucky stiff."

"But he was not really to be envied. There was a tragedy in his life. He loved Cynthia Grey, the most beautiful girl in London, but just as he was about to speak his love, he found that she was engaged to Sit Hector Mauleverer, the explorer".

"Dangerous devils, these explorers. You want to watch them like hawks. In the circs, he would have refrained from speaking his love? Kept it under his hat, I suppose, what?"

"Yes, he spoke no word of love. but he went on worshipping her, outwardly gay and cheerful, inwardly gnawed by a ceaseless pain. And then one night her brother Lionel, a wild young man who had unfortunately got into bad company, came to his room and told him that he had committed a very serious crime and was going to be

arrested, and he asked Mervyn to save him by taking the blame himself. And of course, Mervyn said he would."

"The silly ass! Why?"

"For Cynthia's sake. To save her brother from imprisonment and shame."

" But it meant going to the chokey himself. I suppose he overlooked that?"

"No. Mervyn fully realised what must happen. But he confessed to the crime and went to prison. When he came out, grey and broken, he found that Cynthia had married Sir Hector and he went out to the South Sea Islands and became a beachcomber. And time passed. And then one day Cynthia and her husband arrived at the island on their travels and stayed at Government House, and Mervyn saw her drive by, and she was just as beautiful as ever, and their eyes met, but she didn't recognise him, because of course he had a beard and his face had changed because he had been living the pace that kills, trying to forget. He found out that she was leaving the next morning, and he had nothing to remember her by, so he broke into the Government House in the night and took from her dressing table the rose she had been wearing in her hair. And Cynthia found him taking it, and of course, she was very upset when she recognised him."

"Oh, she recognised him this time? He'd shaved, had he?"

"No, he still wore his beard, but she knew him when he spoke her name, and there was a powerful scene in which he told her how he had always loved her, and had come to steal her rose, and she told him that her brother had died and confessed on his deathbed that it was he who had been guilty of the crime for which Mervyn had gone to prison. And then Sir Hector came in."

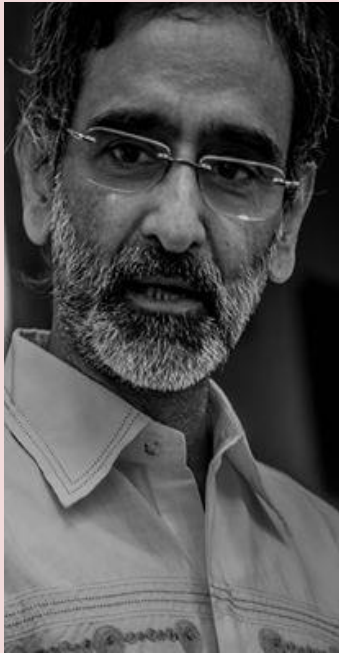
"Good situation. Strong."

"And, of course, he thought Mervyn was a burglar, and he shot him, and Mervyn died with the rose in his hand. The sound of the shot roused the house, and the Governor came running in, and said Is anything missing? And Cynthia in a low, almost inaudible voice, said Only a rose! That is the story of Mervyn Keene."

"Oh ah."

I have always known in a vague general way that Rosie M Banks wrote the world's worst tripe, but I had never supposed her capable of bilge like this...

(Unquote)



Kerala Varma: He hails from Chirakkal (Kannur), Kerala, is a former Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India and lives in Chennai with his wife Chitra. He is an amateur writer, who believes in “simple living, simple thinking”, welcoming enrichers of life like love, humour, long walk, the river, sea, mountain, books, music and Internet and avoiding complicaters of life like greed, anger, ambition, sentimentalism, sexism, god, rituals, religion and superstitions.



ARMY OF KINDNESS

a Kiran Zehra poem

A king bold and old

Had thoughts of gold.

His kingdom spread far and wide

He treated her just like a bride.

His soldiers young and strong

But never whispered wrong.

The mighty king he taught them love

He gave them each an arrow and a dove.

The soldiers' manoeuvre rough and hard

And their doves with love they guard.

The best of knights, the best of pawns

Their arrows nay failed even at dawn.
This King he sayeth "I believe not in war
I believe in you men who go fore.
Now go ye all to the neighbouring land
And feed the poor and lend them a hand.
For that's all they need and that's all they want
You are much different from the men who vaunt.
They know this not that nothing can stay
To the lust of riches they all stand prey.
In their greed they hurt and hate
And cloak it all as religious debate.
But you my men are the army of kindness
You are here to end this blindness.
Because you use not the arrow at hand
Instead you love the dove ye manned.



Kiran Zehra Komail: Put her in the mountains and she will bargain rhymes and rhythm from the tallest tree and the sward. Place her in the concrete jungle and she will sing you a song of love midst the streets and the walls. Show her a burning torch and she would tell you hope is approaching! Call Ms Kiran Zehra Komail, a whirlwind of ideas or a foodie her zest for life is endless and so are her dreams! She could redefine the shades of red, yellow, black or white in words so vivid you'd almost wonder if the true shade of it was this. She works for Rotary News as the Sub Editor of the English and Hindi magazine. Travel, gourmet and people to her are intriguing. Her poems and sketches are her theorem – simple yet deep and humble.



BRUISES AND FLOWERS

I'd get bruised again and
again on the same place.

I'd come back home to my mother's
mumbles and cusses about my
bad habit of falling on my knees.

Other results of contusion were
not just discoloration of my skin
but also an effusion of unabated
hysteria mixed with shame for

making public my inadequacies-
the reason I hate my wounds.
And then one day, my classmate
chided me for crying even at the
age of nine. "Second graders, our
juniors, they don't cry you know?"
The next time I tried to endure.
It was my most creative moment,
my most mindful moment, when
I observed for seconds and minutes.
It was my moment of discovery.
I had resilience in me!
That day, on my way back home,
I picked flowers for my mother.
She was relieved of the fuss forever.



Mahitha Kasireddi: She is from Hyderabad, India. She had been a writer with online magazines Youth Ki Awaaz. She is a former content director at Campus Diaries. Her poems have been published in literary journals such as GloMag, Ink Drift Magazine, Poetry Festival, The New Indian Express, Unbound EMagazine and the Telegram Magazine by the Talking Books, Delhi. She is the writing finalist of the Campus Diaries 25 Under 25 2016 National Contest. She is certified by University of Iowa, USA for completing its MOOC, How Writers Write Fiction: Storied Women 2016. She is currently working on her first anthology of poems.



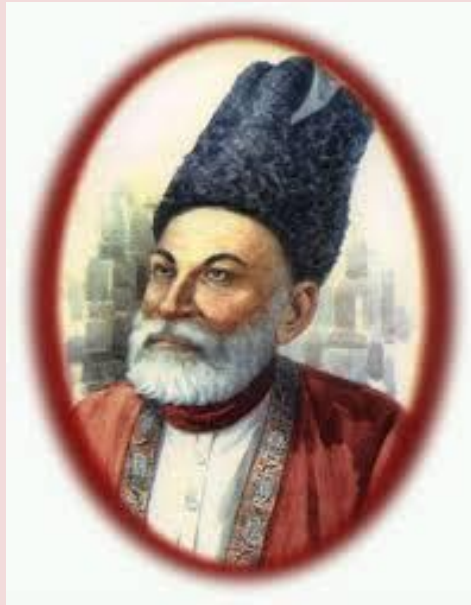
WINTER

It is cold here
and I gather myself snugly
within my comforter
and see misty wishes curling up
along the emerald hills
I see myself ,
getting scattered
in wistful breaths,
and again I inhale

and again I spread
haphazardly ,
blurring the window pane
between the shadows of
rhododendrons and pines,
between what was
and could have been ,
all the love I loved and let go ,
and have loved again
from afar ,
without belongingness,
without madness,
like fleeting puffy clouds
that do not bring in rain.
The dryness of winter mulls
I let love hibernate.



Mallika Bhaumik: She had been a student of literature and did her masters in English Literature from the University of Calcutta. She is passionate about writing and many of her poems and stories have been published in National and International anthologies, well known magazines. She is an event planner by profession and is fond of music, travelling and cooking. She lives with her husband and sons in Kolkata and is a proud Kolkatan.



When nothing prevailed, there was God, if there were
nothing, there would be God

My existence only sunk me, had I not been there, what
would have happened

When grief made me totally disoriented, beheading me
would have involved no grief

If the head didn't separate from my body, it would have
been on (your) thighs

Ages have passed since Ghalib passed away, but he comes
to mind often-

his saying had things happened differently, what would have happened....



Late Mushtaque Ali Khan Babi AKA Max Babi: Max was a multilingual writer, poet who liked a wide variety of formats – whose life was full of oxymoronic shades, a polymath who went from being a specialist to a generalist to a versatilist. Mentoring by being a catalyst enthralled him, he wrote on serendipity and intuition, conducted workshops on a range of subjects and topics. He was a very friendly Santa Claus.



OUR CHRISTMAS TREE??

It's

The month

Of December

Christmas time

Comes once a year

A pleasure to bring her down

On the first day of December

Resting peacefully in the loft

For the past eleven months

A tempting moment for all
To arrange her puzzled
Rustling green branches
The pine cones protruding
In between here and there
Smiling as we decorate her
Dressing up with rice bulbs
in white red blue and green
Adorning her with glittering
Ornaments rich in colours
Gold silver red and green
Garlands glass and metal
Balls bells trumpet stars
Soft red Santa clauses
Snow men made of white
Angels with their wings spread
Red velvet bows and Poinsettia
Bird figurines with real feathers

Star of the midnight as a topper
A kind of tree anyone would love
To have love possess and honor
A gift by my mother to our home
Always will be treasured forever
Our dear and pretty tree of cheer
Christmas season is finally here
A season of joy love and peace
O Christmas Tree
O Christmas Tree
I hear the carol of bells
Chiming across my room



Merlyn Alexander: I hail from Nagercoil, had my schooling and college there and did my post-graduation in Botany. Surrounded by nature all around our district with tall coconut trees fringed sea shores, beginning of the Western Ghats, paddy fields and coconut grove, rubber plantations, with some red cliff valleys and scattered mountainous terrain, I feel blessed that nature has lots to offer for my poems. I'm an ardent lover of nature. Other than writing my hobbies include painting, craft, travelling music reading and cooking. I'm a blogger and I have a cookery blog. I would love to publish a cookery book someday. My collection of poems in a book. Gimme some time.

www.alexanderskitchenrecipes.blogspot.com



THE VEIL OF DEATH

Great power of brawn or brain,
against that mysterious barrier fail;
though spearing eye and razor gaze,
no power to pierce that delicate veil!

What lies beyond that, who can say?

Who has returned to tell?

Who can escape the inevitable fate,
announced by that tolling bell?

The well-endowed, with power and wealth,
whose life like a ray of light;

they who weep, and suffer and strive,
all are lost in that unfathomable night!

Perhaps there is a fork in the road
that lies behind that inscrutable door?
One that leads to light and joy,
the other to punishment and woe!

What can one do to escape the dark,
to gain the path that's bright?
Only the love that you spread around
the lives that you touched with light!



Minnie Tensingh: I think I have been writing from the age of 10, contributing to the school and college magazines. Several prizes for creative writing and poetry competitions have encouraged me to keep at it. Reading is my passion and often distracts me from writing. I have brought out a story book targeting children in their pre and early teens to encourage reading among children titled, “Mischief In The Mountains.”



pic taken by Moinak Dutta

Come friend, let's go there once again
Where once we haply went
After a long unending summer-
That summer which us scorched and burnt
And brought the sultry heat right into our souls
Drying them, almost making us parched,
Out of that, remember mate?
How we went away like leaves
Blown away, torn away almost from all those things
That brought us down,
O how we flew
Carried like birds ,
Feathered things

Borne by the light

To that place

Where silence talked to us like our forgotten selves

Whispering us to remain awake all the day

Only to grasp the meaning of our journey

So made ;

Come friend, lets go there once again.



Moinak Dutta: WELCOME! JULEY! BON JOUR! CIAO!

Me? I am nothing...I'm not a conscious poet...I just scribble;
For scribbling is like singing spontaneously...It is like
dancing loving the movements of body...So I live...So I wish
to depart...



THESE DAYS I DO ONLY WHAT THE HEART SAYS

These days I do only what the heart says.

These days I swim in the deep waters within,
this is the vanaprastha, emotive of the jungle inside;
no, it's not leaving living-life, it's delving
deeper into the verve,
gloriously singing Gloria's romantic number
"You are too good to be true..."

These days I do only what my heart says.

I warm up my hands with brewing coffee
and the soul with the kaleidoscopic changes around.
Brooding over my own fascination, happily

parting with the ever-nourished austere Puritan gravity,
these days I listen to my spirit.

Marveling, perhaps there is someone at the other end ---
too willing to read, waiting eagerly
for my outpourings
to show on the
screen .

Continued...



Nandini Sahu: She is a major voice in Indian English poetry, is an Associate Professor of English in IGNOU, New Delhi, India; she is a creative writer, theorist and folklorist ; she is the author/editor of eleven books; has been widely

published in India, U.S.A., U.K., Africa and Pakistan. Dr.Sahu is a double gold medalist in English literature, the award winner of All India Poetry Contest, Shiksha Rattan Purashkar and Poiesis Award of Honour, 2015. She is the Chief Editor and Founder Editor of two bi-annual refereed journals, Interdisciplinary Journal of Literature and Language(IJLL) and Panorama Literaria. Her areas of research interest cover New Literatures, Critical Theory, Folklore and Culture Studies, Children's Literature, American Literature and ELT.



AMBITIONS

What'll become of you, dad asks,
30 years down the line,
would you still be writing absurdities?

30 years is a long time, my child
and things, they change

your shoulders won't hold the burden of the world, they'll
tremble and heave and the sweat will get into your eyes
and

make it impossible for you to see, your lips will feel dry
when you try to kiss your lover,

and in 30 years, you'll need pills just to gather your muscles
together into a smile, you'll realise pension plans are more
important than taking buses that never really went
anywhere

you'll see people, often don't mean a word they say, and
sometimes what they don't say holds
their hearts in an unshaken palm

In 30 years, dear son, would you still be writing?
would what you chose to become still look into
the eyes of what might have become of you?

he waited for an answer, and I gave him none
noticing however, how much his hair had greyed lately,
how much his eyes had darkened
we sat, strangers, noticing silly things
while silence overtook us, like emboldened
clouds, waiting, ready to rain



Nilesh Mondal: He is 23, is an engineer by choice and a poet by chance. His works have been published in magazines like Muse India, Coldnoon Travel Poetic, Inklette, The Bombay Review, and many more. He works at Terribly Tiny Tales as writer and curator, and is prose editor for Moledro Magazine. His first book of poetry, 'Degrees of Separation' (Writers Workshop), is scheduled for a February 2017 release.



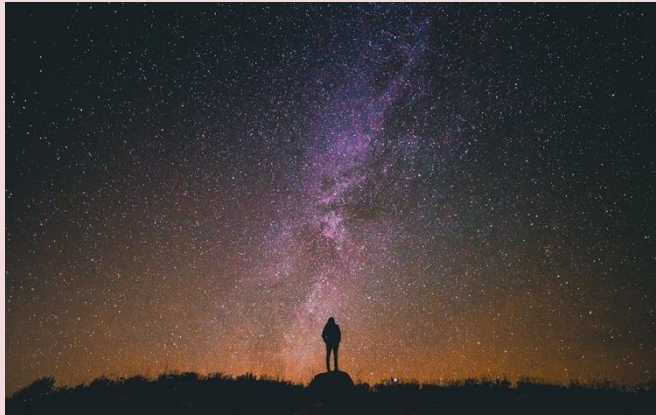
THE BEE IN MY BONES

there is a bee in my bones
it flew within me
the day you gave me that sunflower
it buzzes every time
you call me and speak with me
In your flutey voice
my knee aches and my ankles
hurt.

But now the bee stopped buzzing,
But there is a pouch of honey that
flows through the bones, soothing it.



Nivedita Narsapuram: She is an unschooled student of poetry and prose. She writes to make sense of the chaotic world around through her stories and poetry. Among her other interests, she loves exploring Wisconsin and soaking in the warmth of its people and its harsh winters. She blogs at: nnivedita.com.



HOW THE CURIOUS SEE THE WORLD

I know not

How others see things in this world

To me, it's all relative

As we move

From alpha to omega

Into the supernovae of ideas

Past the black holes shrouded in obscurity

Through the dust storms raging for all eternity

We crawl ever so slowly

Hoping to find the solution

Creating even more questions

This poem can be read from first to last or in the reverse direction.



Nivedita Karthik: She is a graduate in Integrated Immunology from the University of Oxford who likes reading books and travelling. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and has given many performances. She loves any form of creative writing (especially poems) and writes whenever she can.



Sunlight frolics between the trees

Playful, cheery and golden.

Hardly a sound escapes my lips

As I gaze into the limpid pools of sunshine

Playing peekaboo with the elusive shadows

This is the forest where I dare to walk in

On the pretext of sightseeing.

My eyes dart here and there like fireflies in the dark

Is that a sinuous snake slithering behind my feet or just a
creeper that Snares my shoe

As imperceptible as a shadow that follows me where I go

The forest beckons me

Like a lover, and I go deeper and deeper

Into its green embrace

The lush foliage, home to many life forms

Seems to entrance me into meek submission

What a different world this is

Deceptive and elusive

I feel trepidation and wonder

Chilling my heart and loving the sensations.

The staccato noise of a woodpecker's beak, The occasional animal calls beckon my soul, and a delicious fear crawls down my spine.

I look over my shoulder, and lock my stare with the wide eyed gecko that gazes at me from his sunny spot on a boulder.

A walk in the jungle will become

A walk down memory lane

In ages to come.



Padmini Rambhatla: She is a homemaker and Creative writing teacher who enjoys her different roles as loving wife to an awesome and caring hubby, and as mom to her two sons, Rahul and Arjun .She loves the company of her students and strives to make them enjoy reading, writing and using their imagination to create wholesome and interesting

stories. She enjoys watching movies in English, Tamil and Hindi. Padmini dabbles in art occasionally and loves cooking a variety dishes for friends and family.



LIKE LOVERS DO

And then we fight like lovers do
For chunks from each other's whole
We keep to oneself when we are low.
But I am divided now
A little wound stacked here
Hurt left over there
And when you whack me with words
Commanding spirited attention
With you alone as my centre
My love, I am but a mortal in pain
That needs a little time
To gather bits life left crumbled

But I suppose all you see
Is a woman cold and distant
To your love and verve.
Disappointed and cross
At not being loved back
You pick on this and that
And I try and stop you
From hurting me further.
Sigh! We fight like all lovers do.



Panjami Anand: I am an occult practitioner by profession and I see every day it is hard to be honest in a brutal world that demands the best façade even at the cost of one's inner well-being. Sometimes it helps to know that we are all fighting secret battles and we are not the only ones in pain. I love to

observe human relationships and nothing inspires my writing more. Thus the dominating theme of all my writings are conflicts and triumphs of the same. I thank each and every one who has encouraged me to better my expression. Gratitude for reading!



Come, let me hold you
Tell you a Story,
Watch a movie with you
Let us dance, dance away the Blues.

Come, let me hold you
Make coffee for you
Whisper: I love you
Touch you softly, gently.

Speak, speak your Mind
Clear all the doubts
Cry, if you like,

Let me wipe the Tears.

Let us go out

Go places you wanted

With no bags

Just me and you

No Mobile, no Camera

Let us leave the World behind.

Leave yesterday out

Tomorrow too

Children, family

Everyone out

Just You and Me.

Time, now, stand still.

Come, lie by my side

Wrap you with Peace

Moon , the New Moon

New Year, New Dawn

The universe smiling

Gentle Breeze, Welcome.



Parasuram Ramamoorthi: Poet with three published volumes of Poetry. Norwich Musings (2003); Fire courts Water 2009; Neem Gita 2011; Playwright with twelve plays published and Performed. Autism Advocate and Pioneer in the file of Drama for Autism. Chairman VELVI www.velvi.org



LEFTOVERS

June sat at her desk, arranging and rearranging a sheaf of clouds over the parched map. The clouds felt brittle in her delicate fingers, as if they would break at the slightest hint of a breeze.

She could still remember the day when the box was handed over to her. It had brimmed with the scent of newly washed earth. She had held the moist weight of a cumulus in her hands, worn a cirrus or two in her hair and stepped into the wool of a mackerel. Then one day, the clouds stopped pouring from her eyes.

The box that was her only possession may have still been the same except the vines that once covered its lid in a trail of memories had all but withered away.

Rapunzel syndrome

the bezoar

of long-gone dreams



Paresh Tiwari: An electrical engineer by profession, a creative writer, and illustrator by choice, Paresh Tiwari, grew up in the labyrinthine lanes of Lucknow. He took to Japanese literary short forms in the winter of 2012. Since then his haiku, haibun, tanka, haiga, free-form poems and flash fiction pieces have been published in various journals, anthologies and books. His first collection of haiku and haibun 'An inch of sky' was published by 20 Notebooks Press and is available online.



A ROTTEN DAY!

Oh dear, Oh dear!

I'm growing old

How do I know?

I can tell by the mould.

The decay is accelerating

I'm rotting away

I've been doing it now

For a night and a day

And all that is left

is an arm and a leg

And a brain to finish

This poem I beg

Oh darn it, I'm down

To a finger and brain

I blame it all, on

Too much rain

But my finger keeps

going right on to the end!

Oops I think I am slipping

Gone round the bend



Late Philip G. Bell: He was born in West London and became a professional in the field of vibration and acoustics. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Environmental

Engineers. He has two sons and a daughter and 3 grandsons. He has written a number of technical papers, which were published internationally, before turning attention to writing poetry, short stories and a children's novel. He also founded The Young Poet Society. He has published a novel, "The Elfin Child," which is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and at www.elfinchild.com



NO KNOCK ON MY DOOR

NO knock on my door

Not even the wind

The sun did not peep through my window

Nobody saw the postman in my vicinity

However the New Year came

when i was in a meditative mood

celebrating silence in Walcott's tone

"silence is ocean-deep

silence is earth-deep

silence is love-deep"

One page of diary became past memory
A few sketches given the name language
A few alphabets decoded became words
new meanings are assigned
But the night remains the same
The morning remains the same
Star-studded sky, green grass,
Dew droplets, and the sun rising out
Of the eastern horizon
The breeze covering the space in
Between men, bungalows, roadways

what is the role of a cowdung in this
Vast universe, oh Lord!
Tell me, what role does dew perform
We are all but unwritten passages of a diary
Braille is the only language
Touch is the code
we can smell only
Laughter, the only way to pay our gratitude

But does anybody laugh today?
The city knows how to weep only
Hands know how to stab
Veins of the city oozes blood only.
What shall I do with this slaughterhouse, tell me
That you call planet earth!



Prahallad Satpathy: He hails from Balangir district of Odisha (India) is a bilingual poet. He writes both in Odia and English. So far he has published three anthologies of poetry in Odia to his credit. His poems have been published in national anthologies like Scaling Heights and international anthologies like GLOBAL ANTHOLOGY ON PEACE AND HARMONY, HAPPY ISLE, FEELINGS INTERNATIONAL, etc. By profession, Dr. Satpathy is a Reader in Economics, at present in Rajendra autonomous college, Balangir (Odisha). He has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as honorary member for two consecutive terms.



SHADES

Shades and shades,

What eye candy Nature dishes up, in every corner of the
Universe!

Some shades beyond our limited vision,

Animals see different shades,

The blind can see what we cannot,

So many shades of feelings and emotions,

So many shades of knowledge,

Shades of grey and white in man's character,

We ultimately have to reach that Shade, which defies
description,

That just Is.



Pratima Apte: I am an English Hons. Graduate of Delhi University. I am a homemaker, recently turned grandmother!

I used to write sporadically in the Pune edition's Women's page of the Indian Express. I love reading and writing, words are my world. My interests in reading are self-help books, spiritual and cookbooks and fiction. Books by Ayn Rand, Taylor Caldwell, Leon Uris, J Krishnamurthy, Dan Brown have been my favourites, as also layman's homeopathy, astrology and medical books.



shopping for hours
Women rejuvenate
Men collapse.



She loves a sadist
He becomes dad
She becomes mad.



While in deep love
I push her away
Sincerely hope
She hugs me closer.



Praveen Ranjit: He is a creative writer who gets inspiration from nature to social issues and enjoys writing poems on love, life, compassion, happiness, human relations nature's beauty etc. At a very young age he developed his writing skills, published poems in various anthologies and periodicals and received many awards of excellence. He was a professor in the Department of Commerce, St. Albert's college, Kochi, Kerala from 1981 to 2014.



first spring breeze...
I give Rocky his kibble
in old Rex's bowl

puppy fight...
my army of worries
melts away

pee break
— my dog and I
share a tree

hatsuyuki...
sweeping up all his
summer shedding

morning after
my dog keeps bringing back
all your things

monsoon wedding
— the smell of wet fur
on my sherwani

dog dreams
the bed I left unmade
too far away

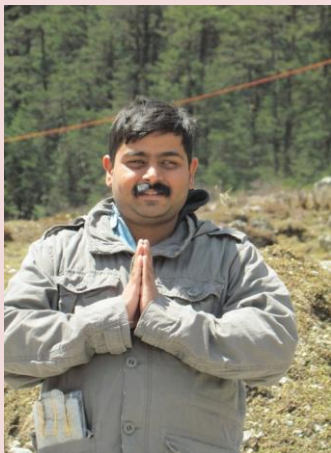
homecoming...
my shadow turns white
and grows a tail

fall colours —
my little furball
snuggles closer

between wheezes
growling softly to show
the pup his place

pentothal...
I bury your chew toys
and a bit of me

empty basket
I have the fireplace
all to myself



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: He moonlights as an award-winning copywriter by day and daylights as an award-wanting poet by night, and sandwiches an archaeology course, running two literary clubs, astronomy, the occasional trek, some peer counselling for suicide prevention, and learning

languages in between. He thinks he is funny, but his friends vehemently disagree.



A DAY IN DECEMBER

Wind's whirling whiz
extricating the embedded pulse
of roots and rigmarole.

Rebecca unleashing many a
Mystery and clairvoyance.

Notes flow on the window
unaware of exorcists outside.
but there is a garguntine outlet,
the oval balcony window
in a combative jittering mood.

A Call ensures from afar,
Unionizing in the wilderness
many a disoriented and fearless.
Just one day for me, but for
those stubbornly afflicted
outcome of aeons' targeted
schedule seamlessly enacted.
Beneath the stormy winds
Once subsided, Angels fan
and delight to fan their fans.



S. Radhamani: She was born in Madras, did B.A. English, obtained M.A. English from Venkateswara University, Tirupati, did her doctoral thesis on W.H. Auden's Plays, subsequently obtained PGDTE from CIEFL (Hyderabad). A

Professor of English with 31 years of teaching experience in a post-graduate and research institution, published four books of poems and one book of short story, widely published and anthologized, guided M.Phil. research scholars and PhD candidates, and a reviewer and critic. Also published poems and short stories in many websites, presented papers in National and International conferences.



my dearest lady,

i miss you.

the night's so cold,
so clear, so quiet
quieter than your photograph
and you're scattered
in my every heartbeat
hush..hush..

i hear its cold in the hills,
have you taken your warm clothes?
i'm learning how to make soup,
i'll make you some next time you're cold.

look up,
i've painted the sky black
so we both get lost in the immensity
of this night
so there's no tomorrow
so you don't have to leave,
once more

i need to see you,
see those eyes, those lips
those hands, that smile
i need to hear you.
i need to breath the
air around you.
they will heal me
yes, i know they will

happy birthday love
your gifts have piled up,
so this year it's only the letter

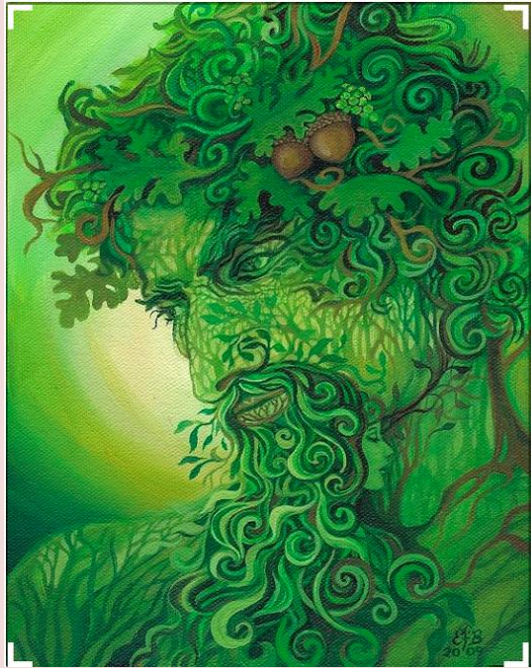
tomorrow will be warm,
i promise.

godspeed.

always yours



Rajesh Jethwani: He was born in Madras and has done his BA in economics. He now takes care of his family business and has his own online store. His love for tea resulted in a beautiful tea house he now runs along with his best friends. He loves train journeys, photography, eating out and playing cricket. He loves writing and reading love poems. His poem was first published last year in South Africa.



THE GREEN GOD

The god in the bottle is green
and bubbles over with love
He bitter-tongues into me

I babble sweetly incoherent
He listens with the attentiveness
of an inquisitive crow as my stories
burp and overflow

He floats around in my blood stream
stopping at the shrines built for him, I kneel

The waves he flounces them with
makes my head reel

He is me I realize, I am all for him
Happy in this stupor, I confess to several pending crimes
He, riddled by my insolence
leaks out through my dithering tongue

The gossip is on the loose
An incessant pound in my temple's throb
The base notes of my bottled god
swirling high, wickedly spicy



Reena Prasad: She is a poet/writer from India, currently living in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). Her poems have been published in several anthologies and journals e.g. The Copperfield Review, First Literary Review-East, Angle Journal, Poetry Quarterly, Lakeview International Journal etc. She is also the Destiny Poets UK's, Poet of the year for 2014 and one of the editors of The Significant Anthology released in July 2015. More recently, she was adjudged second in the World Union Of Poet's competition, 2016. She writes at Butterflies Of Time.



AFTER DEATH

First, 'is' becomes 'was' ;

His name turns into theory

a memory. The colour of air.

His photographs in family albums

transmute into metaphors for an era

that receded into the ocean of time.

Everything about his life

becomes overtly certain;

All those inexplicable moments

start secreting a language.

His dispersed personality becomes

intact-- like a scrupulously

crafted character in an epic novel.

His multitudinous life will be
reduced into a linear narrative
of dates, places and names.

They bury him in red soil or burn
him on pyre of fragrant sandalwood.

An unstained image with its own
blood and skeleton, skin and flesh
replaces his memory--
that travels backwards in time.



Ro Hith: He is a poet and a medico from Andhra Pradesh, writing poetry since 7 years. His poetry has been published in various online magazines, including Muse India, The Four Quarterly, Istanbul Review, Kritiya, New Mirage Journal and print magazines like Kavya English, which was applauded and complimented by various senior poets. Currently, he is

working on his first book of poems, which will be published shortly and an online magazine that deals with progressive poetry and translations from various Indian languages.



FOLDS IN THE SAME GARMENT

so much older then

too much older

to begin again,

to be discarded,

dumped-

hello, goodbye

so much older then

absolute broke down palace

patched with malice

deck of cards

missing jacks and aces-

sterile, invisible, abstract bard,

ready to burn,

lifeless,
ashes fill this corporeal urn
this pyre of ice,
fire, flesh-
reborn twice

so this time younger now
heading for that hunger now
distracted by possibilities now
shadowed by some hint of light now
fantastic strange kicking out constellations here
this time around

this time continual miracles
electric streetlights shining
so much younger
absolutely audacious avenues,
cool cathartic youth-smashing teeth
trashing truth,

so much younger here
suddenly breathing air underwater,
exploring,
then blowing past borders,
deploring order

yeah, this splash painting forming
colors me now,
draws from what came before
burgeoning into this fervent rainstorm
of busy being born
now younger now
then older then,
next rebel becoming
some mirror facing a mirror
rekindling those long-deserted possibilities



Robert Feldman: Born in Paterson, New Jersey, Robert Feldman was inspired at an early age by members of Paterson's literary tradition. He has organized and participated in poetry readings, produced and hosted a community issues news hour and a biweekly bebop jazz radio program on KDNA-FM. Robert was instrumental in publishing influential writers such as Drummond Hadley and Michael Gregory, and collaborated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti on his Bisbee publication, "Mule Mountain Dreams." He continues to write, paint, and play tabla, besides working with high-school students as faculty advisor of the Park Vista Writers Workshop.



A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

The world turns in Winter December.

Empty branches

casting silhouetted shadows

are lean, clean and light;

all the heavy load

of leaves

carried diligently throughout the year

are released.

The work is done.

The job, complete.

The tree rests, relaxes and stiffens

in the cold, having earned a short respite.

It has been a good year –

another ring is added to the trunk

as a trophy of achievement.

A steady life continues.

A stoic warrior

stands strong in the snow,

unmoved by harsh winds.

He has experienced it all

time and time again,

never wavering in his methodical

movement through the seasons.

Yet, something is not quite right –

even though the rest is peaceful

and the branches are easier to hold up now

than they are during the Spring,

there is a tiny tug

upon his heart

that looks forward

to the next growth,

for the tree knows, more than anyone,
that thankless work is good for the soul.



Scott Thomas Outlar: He hosts the site 17Numa.wordpress.com where links to his published poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, and books can be found. He recently received three Pushcart Prize nominations for his work in 2016. Scott serves as an editor for Walking Is Still Honest Press, The Blue Mountain Review, Novelmasters, and The Peregrine Muse.



FREE VERSE AND OTHER WAYS OF CURSING

Imagine that when the time comes
the seconds of those hours' return
with the misfortune of gravestone
lethargy & the stubborn hands
of the unworthy artifact
get stuck & again our eyes
return to the offensive insistence
of our presidential election.

Imagine the clock of death,
endless centuries, seasons,
geological ages, species, mutation
of these species, other galaxies,
worlds, abysses, impossible
universes, everything that could,

in short, have a name, wailing.

Imagine that for us it is always

that moment, forever the moment ...



Sergio A. Ortiz: He is the founding editor of Undertow Tanka Review. His collections of Tanka, *For the Men to Come* (2014), and *From Life to Life* (2014) were released by Amazon. He's a two time Pushcart nominee and a four time Best of the Web nominee. His poems have been published in over four hundred journals and anthologies.



CHAOS

Chaos, chaos everywhere chaos

leading towards catastrophes

People panicking

not able to handle

current situation

revolving themselves

day and night

towards materials possession

sometimes according to requirements

but sometimes

more than requirements

without any patience

making themselves obsessed

just for mere attainment
of physical needs.



Shamenaz: I reside in Allahabad. I am a freelance writer, passionate reader, blogger, and poet, with many published poems in E-journals & magazines in India. I have presented papers in India and abroad. I am in the Editorial board of journals: Literary Miscellany, Cyber Literature, Research Access, Expression, The Context & IJRHS (Jordan). I am the Guest Editor of 'The Context' Volume 2, issue 3. I have served as a Chairperson of Women Cell of my College, AIET & Cultural Incharge, AIET

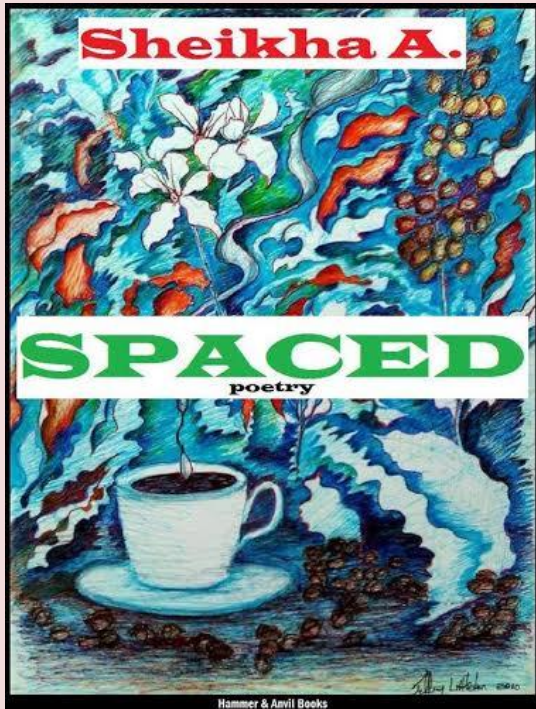


'Noir, 01' photography by Suvojit Banerjee

RIGHTS

There is no truth in liberation;
the stars sit in confined layers
only the fallen of which hang
low. The sky, too, sits within
several of its predecessors,
each one with a story mightier
than the last. There are seats
by ranks I haven't earned yet.
None of it matters as I look
at the stars; if the dead shine
this bright, I shouldn't blister

my soul. The price is tenable –
I hang low but not without
a crown.



Sheikha A.: She is from Pakistan and United Arab Emirates. Her work has appeared in over 80 literary venues both print and online. She edits poetry at eFiction India. More about her can be found on her blog sheikha82.wordpress.com



SUPER MOON SILENCE

Slippery jazz, of coke and ice
Luna drowns in the effervescence
Orbital strings call it a night
While brushes waltz in starry silence.

Somewhere lost in this aesthetic
Memories of the past found me
Lonely, yet listening to the silent cries
Of a musician rid of melody.

On the sky bridge he stood staring,
At the super moon in bleeding skies
For it never before shone so bright
Earning its place in starry night.

And maybe someday he'll be like her
Finding himself in lost skies
With Slippery jazz escaping sweet strings
But for now, there is.



Shivank Sarin: Like chocolate sprinkles on dessert, poetry and music have added excitement and sweetness to my life. I'm technically 18, but to me, age acts as no barrier towards being cynical or insightful. I'm notorious for my gluttonous appetite and even skipping social gatherings just to attend music lessons. I'm soon to be a first year student studying Economics at Ashoka University, where I hope to further develop my musical, literary as well as professional abilities.

Would love to hear from you at-

shivanksarin98@gmail.com



DOOMED PROGENY

Amid the darkening gloom

We sat

He and I

Anticipating impending doom

Twilight, always with a shivery feel

Thoughts of perforated steel

Sinking deep into gloom

Why was I- a misfit?

His deep insight

Sinking into mine

Was there a diversion

Is there diplomacy

When one thinks of secrecy

In a mission incomplete?

Thoughts of our missing progeny
Into the hands of a misled generation

Our hearts full to its

Brimming ----height of grief

Will there ever be an end

To the tragic bend

That fate has taken

And given back nothing

No, No, our minds in unison scream

Our son will survive

The fierce test of fate

And revive

The lost glory of his nation

Where, where was it that

Our minds wavered

And put our son into

The hands of cadaverous minds

The insidious turn that fate had taken
Took a toll on his impressive mind
And made him compliant
in the hands of cadaverous minds



Shobha Warriar: Born near Trichur in Kerala, Shobha was highly influenced by her maternal grandfather who was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar. Shobha has a keen interest in languages, be it prose or poetry. She has also worked as a teacher in schools for some time.



TIME

No more my day,
No more, they say.
My nights reverberate
In this ocean of dreams,
My hours still in your hands.
The pictures shred,
New ones evolve,
Dissolve, and finally solve
The enigma of my Time.



Shreekumar Varma: He is an Indian author, playwright, newspaper columnist and poet. He received the R. K. Narayan Award for Excellence in Writing in English in 2015. He is known for the novels Lament of Mohini, Maria's Room, Devil's Garden: Tales Of Pappudom, The Magic Store of Nu-Cham-Vu and the historical book for children, Pazhassi Raja: The Royal Rebel Born as HH Prince Punartham Thirunal of the Travancore Royal Family, he is the great great grandson of the artist Raja Ravi Varma and grandson of Regent Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, the last ruling Maharani of Travancore. He is married to Geeta Varma (poet, teacher and columnist) and has two children, Vinayak and Karthik.



WELCOME

The flame of lamp, that keeps on illuminating,
even against the blowing winds,
Brightness welcomes that!

The clouds, which can bring rain,
even without thundering,
Monsoon welcomes them!

Those, who have learnt to stand up,
even surrounded by failure,
Success welcomes them!

Those, who can hide their own tears,
even in the moments of pain,

Smile welcomes them!

Those, who have got a potential,
to cross all the hurdles,
Destination welcomes them!

Those, who just know to move,
further and further,
Target welcomes them!

Those, who can feel,
the pain of others,
Happiness welcomes them!

Those, who serve to live,
only for others,
Wishes and blessings welcome them!

Those, who can bear,
even the hot sunlight,

Shadow welcomes them!

Those, who can sail the boat,
even among stormy waves,
Shores welcome them!

Those, who learn to accept,
every situation of this life,
Life welcomes them!

Those who, have accepted,
the bitter truth of death,
Salvation welcomes them!!!



Sonia Gupta: She is an oral pathologist and senior lecturer in a dental institute. She has published English poetry anthologies, Fountain of Inspiration and Canvas of Life..With My Pen and two Hindi poetry anthologies. She has also been published in various other anthologies. The awards she has received include: Nari gaurav samman, Yug surbhi samman, Prem sagar samman, Women of the year samman, sahitay gaurav samman in hindi literature. Her other hobbies are paintings, singing, cooking, knitting, embroidery and designing. email: Sonia.4840@gmail.com



VARDAH

Nature took its annual turn

Two years in a row

To slap my city around;

Either live in denial or be

Indelibly marked a survivor.

She'd morphed into a demon

Formless, shapeless, invisible

But palpable; She whirled in

On raging wings, whipping into

Submission living and nonliving.

Latches broke, windows flung open.
Tied, they strained, banged in protest,
Shattered—unstoppable rain poured indoors.
Outdoors, I drove my car to higher ground to
Wade back in eddying flotsam and brawling wind.

What anguish caused such merciless
Tears? In a few hours flooded home again,
Raising drowned carcasses of centipedes and like,
Nesting in my foundation, a tunnelled cave
She thoughtlessly excavated last year.

What multiplying fury heaved her breast
Gusting in and out ferocious breath?
Lashing, wrapping, pulling, thrashing,
Frenziedly browbeating my piteous trees
Shredding, skinning, twisting, bending until broken.

She gathered her angst and stormed away
Leaving wet strays howling unending nights.

My trees, dying silently quivering on their sides,
Or raising bruised beseeching skeletal arms to skies.
Unanswered, they regenerate, greening and succouring.



Sumita Dutta: She is a photographer and the proprietor of Adlsh Photo Art. She has a degree in Fine Arts (Painting) from Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore. She loves writing both poetry and prose. She resides in the southern end of Chennai with her two sons, her father, a cat and a dog. Find her blog at: <https://zippythoughts.wordpress.com/>



DREAMS

Dreams are

leaves of gold

fragile

wind-blown

and falling off the trees in a shrinking forest.

A fresh breath of wind scatters them away

to some dark spot inside the clusters of bamboo or other
trees

or carries them further onto a meandering river

far-off

that gleams in the freckled light as a serpent

ambling on a highway to the horror of

a biker or motorist from an urbanized ghetto!



Sunil Sharma: Mumbai-based, Sunil Sharma is a widely-published writer. He has published three collections of poetry, one collection of short fiction, one novel and co-edited five books so far. He is a recipient of the UK-based Destiny Poets' inaugural Poet of the Year award---2012. Recently his poems were published in the UN project: Happiness: The Delight-Tree-2015.



THE CLOUDS

The clouds, they color the darkness all around,
While the tempest wreaks havoc on the ground.
Such a whirling screeching force,
Like Satan on his manic tours.
Passion inflamed, anger and rage,
Which is right, youth or age?
What kindles man to such unreasoning lust?
What leads him to these acts of disgust?
Its when the devil rides the accursed earth,
The weak and frail are his first worth.
Even God bows before the force so vile,
Would he have willingly forsaken the senile?
No, no, God is there, though not worth his salt,
For He wills one to suffer if only by default
The clouds they threaten to blot the sun,

From my life they will staunch the fun

Oh, why must I pay for another's sin?

Surely death should be better than this life has been?



Usha Chandrasekharan: She is a believer in the power of the universe, in the power of positive energy, in the power of words, in the power of good intentions. She has two children both of good literary prowess, both creative in their own way.



SONGS WE SING

There are songs that we sing

Full throated

A popular ditty

Oft heard in chorus

We sing along with the world

Prelude music in place

Breathing pauses perfected

And then there are songs that try to sing to us

In pregnant silences

In their whispers

Barely audible

The mellifluous strains cascade in the breezes

And we impervious souls

Seldom get the drift



Vandana Kumar: She is a bon vivant who loves travelling, working with young minds and exploring creative possibilities beyond the ordinary. She has done her masters in History from Lady Shri Ram College and her Diplôme from the Alliance Française de Delhi. She is a French teacher in a couple of schools and private institutes and also translates for various publishing houses and corporates. An active member of various quiz clubs across Delhi-she has a soft corner for Kolkata where she spent her childhood. Her various passions include singing, playing the piano, composing music and participating in local antakshari competitions. She describes herself as a dreamer...a wanderer and a certified incurable romantic...the romantic moorings worsened with all her fancy French studies. Poetry for her is her stress buster -her flight of fancy-and strangely – what keeps her rooted too.



Her chin rests on the rough palm,
her nails hurt her skin
and yet she watches this world
through the windows of her car,
every cloud of mist on the window
is from the awe of her breath that thanks
this world a million times
for all the times she has forgotten to blink.

She wondered a little too many times
how she would never get over
the number of stars that shimmered up above
only later did she realise that they were
drops of gratitude from broken souls

that eventually saw the light at the end of the tunnel

She'd smile at a stranger
and wonder if their eyebrows were
inverted smiles from their first birthday party
that the cake they thanked a little too many times

She would feel her lips
to see if the number of thank yous she whispered
secretly to the people who helped her just when
she needed them, was etched on it
and realised why her lips were eternally chipped,
after all, how could one ever balm gratitude?



Vasanthi Swetha: She is an Economics student who is extremely passionate about the art of poetry, dance, reading and dreaming, and she believes that every poem that she writes is a result of a conversation with her soul.



THE ANCIENT FLOCKS OF WILSON STREET

They flock to the park cloaked in black,
perched on benches in the Winter sun,
the bills of their ball caps, like beaks,
dipping in and out. Like the grackles
surrounding bread crumbs,
the ancient Armenians
ease their emotional baggage—too young
to remember but old enough to recall those
who lived through or died from
the Turkish carnage.

Surrounding the tables
filled with scattered dominoes,
on Christmas eve, the old men chatter
of the old country, moving and
connecting the ivory bones
with brittle fingers. This little plot is now
their patch of earth, and territorial
as chastising mocking birds,
they chase strangers from the grounds,
children from weathered monkey bars.



William P. Cushing: Bill Cushing "brings it" home this time out with a poem originally published in the 2015 anthology *Getting Old*. The pictures submitted are from the actual park

depicted in the piece and were taken by Bill. He continues working on new material and is proud to say that one of his poems has been submitted for the annual Pushcart Poetry Prize; even though he realizes that is just the first step in a major winnowing-out process, he is more than happy to be considered worthy of this award.



THE DIN OF DAY LOST TO ME

The din of day lost to me,
The charm that was
Has evaporated from our life
Two human elements, met
At their waterloo
With a friendship, as thin as veils
A love, for each other
A formality.
I fought a battle of nerves
On incognisance superfluous;
Thoughts of life
With a plate of bread and butter

You offered, with love, to fill my
Stomach.

You were not aware
That I was not aware of the world
Lost in thoughts of the void.

The battle fought,
Both stallions standing their
stead;
Both lost, both won.

Then
Napoleon dared not, but I did —
Kicking at the gates of Love
Figuring a mocking giant
I strode down the path with
Air of victory
But a-vanquished was I
For I lost something.

He is great to present us with
A day no more auspicious than this
Straddling down the avenues of your

Kingdom.

I strode majestically down your avenues,

No vanquished ever dare venture.

I tried to build love on formality

For which I paid a penalty.

Consolations one got

With arrows of anger

Radiating from your eyes.

You paraded a loving hatred.

No drama ever matched, that was

Ours today.

Nor will ever match.

Brother, a puzzle I am to self

And you.

A myst'ry-shrouded you.



Yegnaraman Raghavan: He was born in 1954, served as a Signals officer in the army for 20 years before taking premature retirement in 1995. Since then he has worn many hats, as an operations manager, mathematics teacher and bullion market analyst. He used to write poetry as a young cadet, but sadly most poems are lost now. He remains his son Raamesh's strongest inspiration to this day.



HUMANITY IS RELIGION

Humanity is the lesson
common in every religion
but fray amidst humans is for the sacred mansion
which they may call their God's place for some reason
It is a matter of concern
when in spite of the similarity there is a confusion
they ought to realise that there is only One omnipotent
who is a CREATOR of the entire creation
but we like siblings fight for property
sadden our LORD due to aggression
which is shown to secure the religion....



Zebish Farheen: I am a student of Dr. Shamenaz ma'am who is a meritorious professor and guide. It is due to her guidance that I felt motivated to get my pieces of writing published. I am a simple, affectionate, benevolent and emotional person. I believe in the adage -"Where there is a will, there is a way". So I never give way and make the best endeavour to wipe out the impediments in the way of life so as to access the destination of success.



ciao! 😊